



AWESOME PLAYABLE XBOX DEMOS!



OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE

\$4000 OF GAMES TO BE WON!

EXCLUSIVE CEL-SHADED SHOOTING WITH UBI SOFT'S XIII!

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HAVE THE
CENSORS GONE
TOO FAR?

**BONUS
PLAYGUIDE!**
TIMESPLITTERS 2
BUSTED OPEN

M-M-MONSTER KILL!

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!
UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP TOUCHES DOWN!

ALSO INSIDE!
RALLY FUSION
TOXIC GRIND
TERMINATOR
MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2
...AND LOADS MORE!



POCKET-SIZED FUN!
COULD MICRO MACHINES BE THE MULTIPLAYER GAME FOR YOU?

5 EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE DEMOS

- ▶ SPLINTER CELL
- ▶ DEATHROW
- ▶ SEGA GT 2003
- ▶ CHASE
- ▶ MADDEN NFL 2003

No disc? Ask your newsagent!

NEW & EXCLUSIVE SCREENS INSIDE!



**OUTLAW
GOLF**
GOLFING WITH
AN ATTITUDE



**AUTO
MODELLISTA**



**STARCRAFT:
GHOST**



**KINGDOM
UNDER FIRE**



**BIG MUTHA
TRUCKERS**

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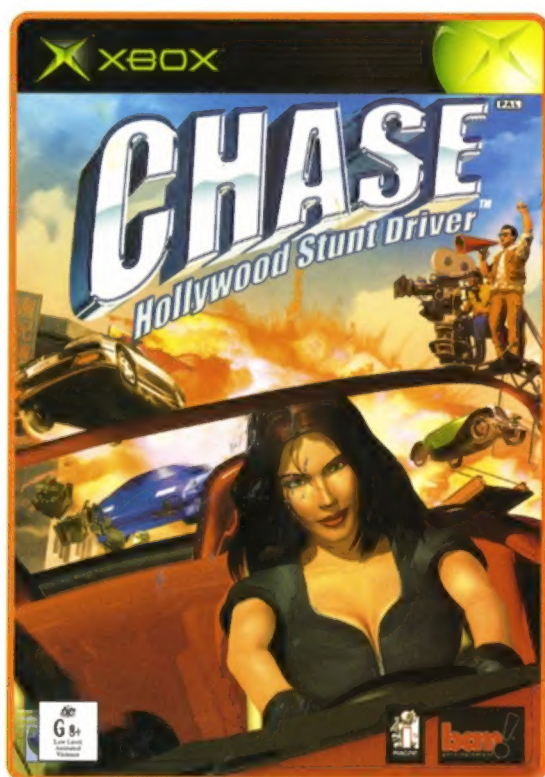


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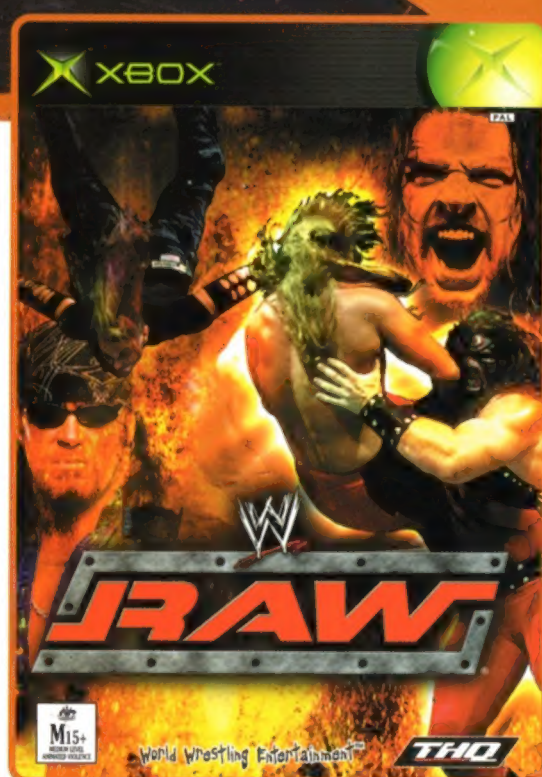
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DERWENT HOWARD

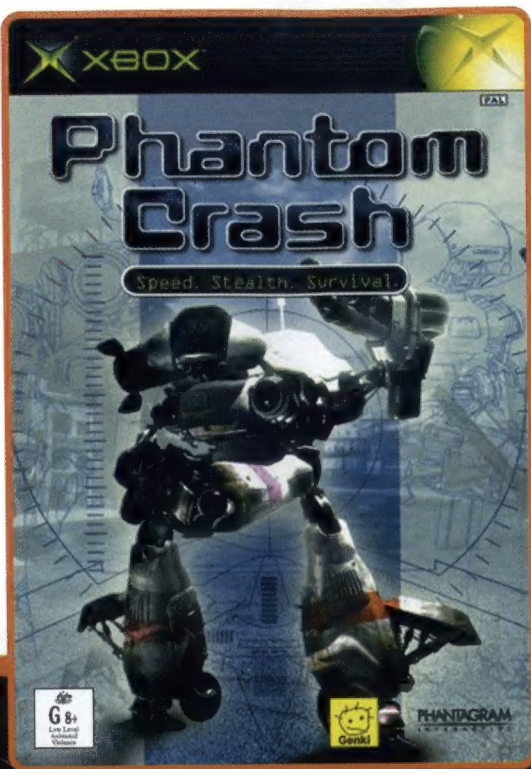
Heading for the beach this summer?



Chase: Hollywood Stunt Driver



WWE Raw



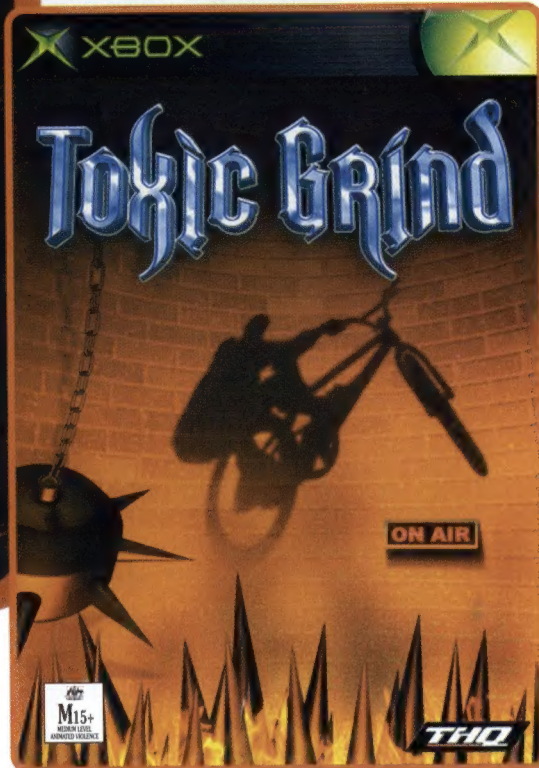
Phantom Crash



Reign Of Fire

TOUR

Think again



Toxic Grind



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OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE

OFFICIAL

>> THE BEST XBOX NEWS AND REVIEWS

PLAYABLE

>> THE EXCLUSIVE SOURCE FOR PLAYABLE XBOX DEMOS

FIRST

>> NEWS, PREVIEWS & REVIEWS BEFORE ANYONE ELSE

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

>> THE *OFFICIAL Australian Xbox Magazine* is written by a group of experienced gamers who've spent their lives playing games. We believe that games are the most exciting form of entertainment there is. This magazine will reflect that at all times.

>> WE BELIEVE THAT the arrival of Xbox represents one of the most important developments in video games. Xbox will not 'kill' the PS2 or GameCube - and as gamers we wouldn't want it to. However, the power and technological innovation offered by Microsoft's new machine will result in better games and more choice for Xbox owners.

>> BEING THE *OFFICIAL Australian Xbox Magazine* means that we are in the best position to give impartial, honest review scores. We don't do any deals to get access to finished games. As a result, we're in the best possible position to give you what you deserve - balanced, objective and accurate reviews on which to base your buying decisions.

>> MICROSOFT HAS no access to, or influence over, the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*. The company's involvement ends once it has made available to us materials we need for the magazine, and it will only read our reviews when you do.

>> HOWEVER, BECAUSE we are the official magazine, we have unprecedented access to the newest Xbox games in development and the people making them. Our coverage of forthcoming titles will take you closer than ever before to the most exciting new games. We will talk to the developers and publish the best new screenshots before anyone else.

>> OUR OFFICIAL STATUS allows us to get closer to every Xbox story, rooting out the truth from the rumours and speculation. Because we can go directly to the people involved, you can be assured that every story in the magazine will be accurate and truthful.

>> THE *OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE* is part of a huge network of games journalists across the globe, ready to visit games developers wherever they are and report exclusively for the *Official Xbox Magazine* World Network.

>> WE BELIEVE that the readers of the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* are one of our most important assets. While it's our job to provide you with the demos, news, previews and reviews you need, we want to be a place where your opinions and expertise can be shared with the new Xbox community.



Release this

RELEASE SCHEDULES are a source of constant amusement at the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*. As anyone who's familiar with the industry will know, release dates change on a weekly basis. Yet one thing that always amazes us is the amount of feedback we receive from readers who are frustrated with the waiting, or who even threaten us with legal action for making them wait longer! Folks, making games is like any other production: they're done when they're done.

Of course, that doesn't mean we're not as frustrated as you are, and there are a few anomalous releases that have caught our attention. Take *V8 Supercar Race Driver*, for instance, launched on PlayStation 2 in August. The PlayStation 2 has a six-month exclusivity period with the game, after which it'll come out on Xbox. It's always been that way as far as we've known, yet over the last four months, numerous industry bodies have said otherwise, even outright denying the existence of a future Xbox version.

The same thing happened with EA's *The Two Towers*, which was widely promoted as being a PlayStation 2 game without mention of any other format. Everyone, including us, was told that's the way it was going to stay. Then, just as *The Two Towers* was released and nobody would notice, it was quietly slipped into the Xbox release schedule for February.

Hindsight tells us these are all deliberate marketing ploys to boost the sales of a particular console format. Xbox is quite guilty of this too - there are many games that have been marketed as a time-limited exclusive, like *Splinter Cell*, *Wreckless* and *Fellowship of the Ring* (which, to our amusement, had a two-week exclusive on Xbox).

Between the three major formats, when it comes to third party titles, Xbox owners have the least to fear. On paper, the Xbox has both power and technology on its side, which is why they'll always look and play better on Xbox. It's just that when companies start competing as fiercely as they are now in the videogames industry, they have to resort to tactics like this, which frankly confuses the hell out of their consumers - even us as well.

Now take EA's *Rugby 2004*, "exclusive" to PC and PlayStation 2. Should we believe it? Past experience suggests we shouldn't.

If there's anything certain, it's this: consumers don't like being lied to, nor have their intelligence insulted. They're not stupid. Let the games speak for themselves, and let the consumers decide what's best.

KEVIN CHEUNG
EDITOR, OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE

HOT THIS MONTH

UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP
Hop on over to page 056

WIN FREE STUFF!
Go to page 031 now!

XIII
Check out page 042

TIMESPLITTERS 2 TIPS
Hurry along to page 091

MINORITY REPORT™

STEVEN SPIELBERG'S FUTURISTIC THRILLER EXPLODES
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DREAMWORKS



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ON THE DISC

WE HAVE your guide to Game Disc 10 right here, and this month we've got FIVE tremendous Xbox Playable Demos.

Special Operative Sam Fisher is the man with the master plan in our exclusive chunk of *Splinter Cell*. There's the whole first mission for you to enjoy.

Deathrow is a violent future-sport where anything goes - swearing, cheating and putting the opposition into the accident-emergency ward. Try out the complete Tutorial mode then pick up to three friends for a full-on brutal match.

If you enjoyed last month's *Chase* Playable Demo, we've got a real treat for you with a level exclusive to the Game Disc. This is the only place you'll ever be able to play this frantic, action-packed mission. It's not even in the final game!

Sega GT 2003 is a real contender in the racing stakes. Choose from two top-of-the-range sports cars and reach the checkered flag before your opponents. And if our excellent slice of *Madden NFL 2002* doesn't convert you to the game, we'll eat our sweaty, brown-at-the-edges sports socks.

To cap it all off, we've got an astonishing 23 Game Movies, including *Blinx*, *Quantum Redshift*, *Crimson Skies* and *Tao Feng: Fist of the Lotus*, which makes for possibly our best demo disc yet! Enjoy the demo disc, and whatever you do, don't eat it!



↑ The Xbox controller is your gateway to the Official Australian Xbox Magazine Game Disc. Use the directional pad or left thumbstick to highlight the menus in the right-hand window and press the A button to select. The B button returns you to the previous menu and the White button zooms in for an extreme close-up of the screen.

SPLINTER CELL

GAME INFORMATION

REVIEWED: ISSUE 08, PAGE 048

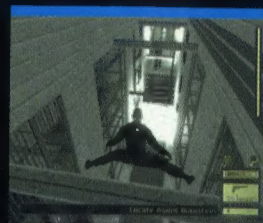
SCORE: 9.7

PLAYERS: 1

WHAT YOU GET

The entire first mission from the game, through which you sneak in the rubber-soled, standard issue boots of Special Operative Sam Fisher.

	LEFT THUMBSTICK	MOVE
	RIGHT THUMBSTICK	LOOK
	DIRECTIONAL PAD	NIGHT VISION /THERMAL VISION
	A BUTTON	INTERACT
	B BUTTON	CROUCH
	X BUTTON	AIM
	Y BUTTON	JUMP / SPLIT JUMP
	L TRIGGER	SECONDARY FIRE
	R TRIGGER	PRIMARY FIRE
	WHITE BUTTON	BACK TO THE WALL
	BLACK BUTTON	QUICK INVENTORY



↑ This requires strong legs.

WHAT YOU DO

During a reconnaissance mission, all communication with Special Agents William R. Blaustein and Alice M. Madison was unexpectedly terminated. Sam Fisher has been sent inside the police precinct to find out what happened to them. Once the Special Agents have been located, he'll need to proceed to the top floor to access the security mainframe.

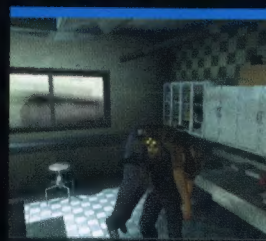
TOP TIPS

Pressing Left on the d-pad activates the Night Vision goggles, while pressing Right switches on the gorgeous-

looking Thermal Vision. Try switching to Night Vision, then shoot out all the lights. Sam will have a distinct advantage over his unsuspecting foes from the cover of darkness.

ANYTHING ELSE?

Having difficulty aiming? Sam Fisher is a crack shot but his aim will be compromised if you don't take your time. Point the crosshair over your prey and you'll see it slowly hone in around him. You can also focus your crosshair on other items such as computer screens, security cameras and even the fire extinguishers.



↑ You must hide the bodies.

DEATHROW

GAME INFORMATION

REVIEWED: ISSUE 06, PAGE 062

SCORE: 9.3

PLAYERS: 1-4

	LEFT THUMBSTICK	MOVE / ROTATE
	RIGHT THUMBSTICK	STRAFE
	DIRECTIONAL PAD	STRATEGY
	A BUTTON	PUNCH / PASS
	B BUTTON	KICK / SHOOT
	X BUTTON	EVADE / BLOCK
	Y BUTTON	JUMP
	L TRIGGER	ATTACK SHIFT
	R TRIGGER	LOCATE DISC
	WHITE BUTTON	CHANGE PLAYER
	BLACK BUTTON	DISPLAY CONTROLS

WHAT YOU GET

Four frantic rounds of *Deathrow* for 1-4 players. There are three teams to choose from - the Sea Cats, Crushers and Nukeheads. You also get a nifty tutorial mode to teach you the finer points behind how best to score goals, crush skulls, and come out of it still breathing.

WHAT YOU DO

Keep your wits about you, and change your team strategy to suit the pace of the game. If you've secured a healthy lead, play defensively and keep the opponents at bay. Beating the daylight out of the opposition often helps.

TOP TIPS

Keep an eye on your health bar and your injury bar. As and when your players sustain injuries, they get slower and



↑ Hold A+B for a special move.

will eventually fall down unconscious. Look for players on the other team who appear to be injured. If you see someone already limping, make him your prime target for physical abuse and turn the limp into an out-of-the-game injury.

ANYTHING ELSE?

As you might have read in the opening intro, *Deathrow* has more swearing than a dockside pub that's run out of beer at 7.30pm. Our Playable Demo has been censored for more sensitive ears, which is a f***ing great idea. The full game includes a wealth of red-blooded gore and foul-mouthed profanity for those of you who like that kind of thing.



SEGA GT 2002

	LEFT THUMBSTICK	STEER
	RIGHT THUMBSTICK	NOT USED
	DIRECTIONAL PAD	STEER
	A BUTTON	UP GEAR
	B BUTTON	DOWN GEAR
	X BUTTON	NOT USED
	Y BUTTON	NOT USED
	L TRIGGER	BRAKE
	R TRIGGER	ACCELERATE
	WHITE BUTTON	REAR VIEW
	BLACK BUTTON	CAMERA

WHAT YOU GET

A single lap quick race around the Tornado Pass with five to beat. There are two cars to choose from, the Ford Mustang GT '01 and the sleek Acura NSX '97.

WHAT YOU DO

Select the Quick Battle mode from the main menu and choose your automobile. Race to the finish in a single lap of the Tornado pass.

TOP TIPS

Both cars in this Demo are very distinctive, so you'll need to try

GAME INFORMATION

REVIEWED: ISSUE 09

SCORE: 7.6

PLAYERS: 1

them both and get a feel for their handling. The Ford Mustang has plenty of horsepower under the hood but, surprisingly, it only has moderate acceleration at the lower end of the speedometer.

ANYTHING ELSE?

The NSX '97 is an easier beast to get to grips with than the Ford, with better handling and acceleration. It's also got an excellent top speed of 190 mph although you might find it difficult to go that fast on the curvy Tornado Pass.

movies

BLINX THE TIME SWEEPER

See why this is the second best game on Xbox.



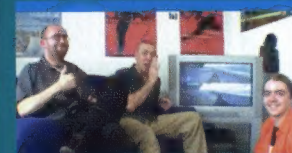
BRUTE FORCE

A welcome peek at the mighty squad-based shooter.



GAME PAD TEASER

Steve and Ben meet Gareth Jones.



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4
QUANTUM REDSHIFT
WWE RAW
STREET HOOPS
KUNG FU CHAOS
WHACKED!
FALCONE:
INTO THE MAELSTROM
SUPERMAN: MAN OF STEEL
ROCKY



NBA 2003 INSIDE DRIVE
NFL FEVER 2003
CRIMSON SKIES:
HIGH ROAD TO REVENGE
KAKUTO CHOJIN
THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD 3
MICRO MACHINES
MONOPOLY PARTY
PANZER DRAGON ORTA
TOP FIVE PLAYS
TAO FENG:
FIST OF THE LOTUS
WTA WORLD TOUR TENNIS

CHASE

	LEFT THUMBSTICK	STEER
	RIGHT THUMBSTICK	NOT USED
	DIRECTIONAL PAD	STEER
	A BUTTON	NITRO
	B BUTTON	NOT USED
	X BUTTON	STUNT
	Y BUTTON	REAR VIEW
	L TRIGGER	BRAKE
	R TRIGGER	ACCELERATE
	WHITE BUTTON	RECOVER VEHICLE
	BLACK BUTTON	CAMERA

WHAT YOU GET

An exclusive action packed stage of the stuntingly good *Chase* that doesn't feature in the finished version of the game. That's right - *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* is the only place you can get this level.

WHAT YOU DO

As in the last level of *Halo*, you have to speed down the entire length of an exploding space ship. You can score points by completing each of the eight mission objectives along the way.

TOP TIPS

You don't have to complete all the objectives on your first try; you can replay the level until they're done. Hitting all seven clapperboards is most difficult

GAME INFORMATION

REVIEWED: ISSUE 08

SCORE: 4.0

PLAYERS: 1

challenge as some of them are on the roof of the cylindrical tunnels.

ANYTHING ELSE?

Because time is of the essence, Chase Corrada's moon buggy is equipped with nitrous oxide. Press the A button to get an instant speed boost. The blue bar in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen shows how much nitro you have left. Try pressing the X button when you're moving at top speed to perform exciting flips and barrel rolls. These kinds of moves are sure to impress the director.

MADDEN NFL 2003

	LEFT THUMBSTICK	MOVE
	RIGHT THUMBSTICK	NOT USED
	DIRECTIONAL PAD	CHOOSE PLAYER
	A BUTTON	THROW TO RECEIVER
	B BUTTON	THROW/CHANGE
	X BUTTON	THROW/DIVE
	Y BUTTON	TOGGLE PASSING ICON
	L TRIGGER	THROW/SWERVE
	R TRIGGER	THROW/SWERVE
	WHITE BUTTON	THROW AWAY
	BLACK BUTTON	DISPLAY ICONS

WHAT YOU GET

Choose from all 32 NFL teams and play a full game. You also get a taste of *Madden's* mini-camp training mode.

WHAT YOU DO

Madden NFL 2003 is all about strategy and choosing where your players are going to move to in order to outsmart the opposition. When attacking, your objective is to progress into the endzone and score touchdowns. If you're defending, you need to prevent the other team from doing the same, by either stealing the ball or halting the attacking team's efforts.

GAME INFORMATION

REVIEWED: ISSUE 08

SCORE: 9.2

PLAYERS: 1

TOP TIPS

If you're really struggling with the numerous different skills involved in American football, give the mini-camp a try. There are four different training modes unlocked in this demo version including Ground Attacks, Quarterback Pocket Presence, Defensive-line Trench Fight and DB Swat Ball.

ANYTHING ELSE?

The full game includes full custom team options as well as seven game modes. You can also take a look at the making of *Madden* with three exclusive documentaries.



XIII

An exclusive first look at Ubi Soft's cel-shaded first-person shooter.

042



RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

The PC hit gets converted to Xbox!

010



STARCRAFT: GHOST

One of the world's favourite real-time strategies turns into an adventure epic.

014



UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP

One of the most highly anticipated first-person shooters since *Halo* finally hits Australia. Does it live up to expectation?

056



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↑ MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2 // 073



↑ TERMINATOR: DAWN OF FATE // 074



↑ HARRY POTTER 2 // 075



↑ REIGN OF FIRE // 078



↑ SUPERMAN // 087



MICRO MACHINES

The frantic multiplayer favourite makes its debut on the Xbox.

066



FIFA 2003

EA finally takes its competition seriously with this strikingly different sequel.

070



RALLY FUSION

Activision introduces a new arcade-style of rally racing to the mix.

062

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ON THE DISC: PLAYABLE



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- »»CHASE
- »»MADDEN NFL 2003

DISC 10 GUIDE STARTS PAGE 006

FIRST LOOK

World exclusive peeks at the very newest Xbox games in development

- ▶ **RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN** // World War... Boo! Reich back where FPS started. **010**
- ▶ **STARCRRAFT: GHOST** // First *Splinter Cell*, and now this! MGS is being given a good run for its money. **014**
- ▶ **KINGDOM UNDER FIRE** // Battle scenes from *Gladiator* and *The Lord of the Rings*, in game form. **016**
- ▶ **SUDEKI** // RPG meets bullet time meets balletic Hong Kong movie combat. With a saucy sorceress. **018**



RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

Stop the evil undead Nazis at all costs!

WORDS: GAVIN OGDEN

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: NERVE SOFTWARE

PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION

RELEASE DATE: 2003

PLAYERS: 1-8, 2-8 ON XBOX LIVE

▶ **SOME BACKGROUND** first. *Wolfenstein 3D* made its debut on PC in 1992, birthed by *Quake* makers id Software. The same company then supervised Gray Matter's sequel *Return to Castle Wolfenstein*, a game which went down a storm on PC when it was released last year.

Now, id is holding the hand of Nerve Software as it brings *Return* to Xbox. Set against the backdrop of World War II, evil Nazi scientists have created an undead army of supernatural beings that has overrun Castle Wolfenstein.

History lesson over, but know this. It's your job to solve the mystery surrounding the ungodly army, and then destroy it.


This is more than a simple PC port. The entire control system has been completely reworked for the Xbox Controller. Nerve has included an auto-aim feature (which can be toggled on and off) to make those clinical head shots a little easier to execute.

The Xbox version will also be paced differently to its PC counterpart, making it more like *Halo* than *Quake* but every bit as playable as both. With all-new levels and multiplayer maps, this is shaping up to be one hell of a shooter.

Xbox is "more than capable of delivering the same high quality visuals of the PC version," says id boss Todd Hollenshead. "Xbox just has a lot more memory compared with the PS2, but we'll also come out kicking and screaming with Dolby 5.1 sound."

All the weapons from the PC version make it across to Xbox, as well as some surprises and there'll be the same mightily impressive volumetric smoke and fire effects. In the PS2 version, levels will be smaller than those on Xbox, so that the less powerful machine can cope with all the action.

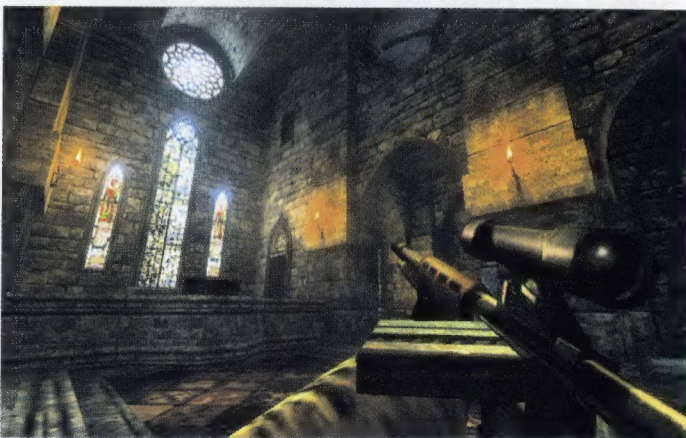
Aside from an absorbing single-player adventure, *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* is looking to shine in multiplayer. The PC game featured all the usual modes associated with a first-person shooter such as Capture the Flag, Deathmatch and Team Deathmatch. For a long time, it was all anyone played online.

However, the Xbox conversion will take things one step further by featuring all of the above and more in split-screen, System Link and, crucially, Xbox Live. Bring. It. On. 

↑ If you can't stand the heat, step away from the flame thrower.



↑ Enemies look real... sometimes too real.



↑ The reflections and shadows will leave you speechless.



↑ Just think, that could be you and a friend playing together on Xbox Live.



↑ Expect full-on assaults from every corner of the labyrinthine building.

BONUS INFO

►► PICK ME

Players can choose from four unique character classes in a multiplayer game. The Medic can revive the wounded and hand out medi-packs. The Engineer can use explosives to solve objectives and enter new areas on the map. The Lieutenant controls the ammo and can call in air strikes and artillery attacks and the Soldier can use all weapons but has no specialisation.

►► CASE HISTORY

Designers who formerly worked at Xatrix Entertainment founded US-based Gray Matter. The former brought us the super-violent PC shooter *Kingpin*, a game that featured the voices of members of Cypress Hill.



↑ Things can quickly turn from bad to worse to the 'Continue' screen if you're not careful.

COMMAND AND CONQUER



WHEN WE HEARD that *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* was coming to Xbox, we sat down and prayed to the multiplayer gods that System Link options would be included. Nerve Software has not only come up with the goods in that respect, it has also gone one step further in making the game fully compatible with Xbox Live. You and up to eight friends will be able to take on the Third Reich by co-ordinating attacks with military precision using the Xbox Communicator, verbally calling for air strikes and medics as well as taunting your opponents. You'll also be able to play co-operatively through System Link and split-screen options. Whether you're into playing online or not, there's a get-yer-mates-round mode for everyone. One day, all games will be made this way...



↑ "I'm the king of Castle" will be a fave phrase among Xbox Communicator wearers.

[illegible]

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Counter-terrorism's silent solution*

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the definitive espionage game"**

9.7/10

Official Xbox Magazine (Australia)

www.splintercell.com



STARCRAFT: GHOST

The RTS classic becomes an adventure game!

WORDS: KEVIN CHEUNG

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: NIHILISTIC

PUBLISHER: BLIZZARD

RELEASE DATE: LATE 2003

PLAYERS: 1

NIHILISTIC SOFTWARE has been quiet for a long time. Nihilistic, you might remember, was responsible for the cult favourite, *Vampire: The Masquerade Redemption*, that came out for the PC. We did know that Blizzard was working hard at making a new game, but we weren't sure it was for Xbox. Well, now these two seemingly unconnected events have come together in a combination that everyone failed to anticipate.

With *StarCraft: Ghost*, the *StarCraft* universe will be completely laid to bare with stealth, shooting, action, and (joy!) vehicles. This is a tremendously ambitious project that hopes to bring gorgeous visuals and the intricate world of *StarCraft* together - its weapons and environments.

StarCraft: Ghost is a third-person action game, with a first-person mode for a sniping, and third-person vehicle

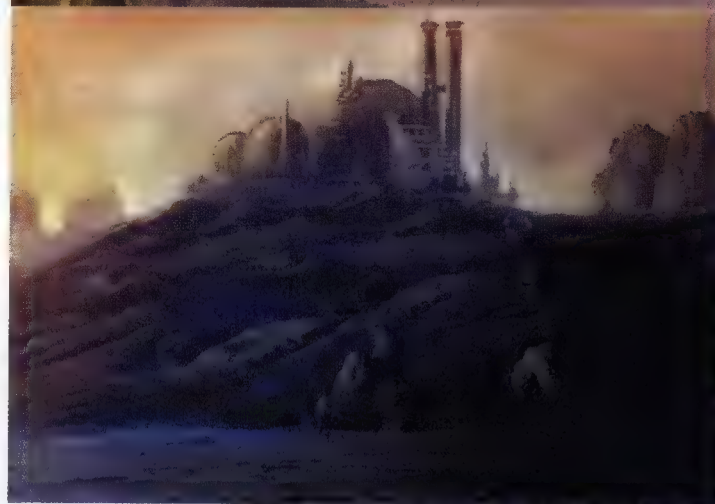
controls. Each alien race from the original *StarCraft* will be represented, though the focus remains squarely on a (sexy) Terran stealth operative "Ghost" named Nova.

One of the frustrations of the original *StarCraft* was its reliance on computer AI to successfully carry out missions. Hopefully you're smarter than a Pentium II, and can use your skill and judgment to ensure that the Protoss and Zerg get their butts handed to them.

You also have a selection of psionic skills available to you, thanks to the fact that all Ghosts are blessed with psychic and telekinetic powers. For the most part, though, you'll be using an assortment of Terran and alien weapons, ranging from C-10 Canister Rifles to flamethrowers.

Nova can perform a wide range of stealth moves, from slicing the throats of unsuspecting bad guys to becoming practically invisible, but her most impressive skill is her ability to call in a nuclear strike. It looked good in the top down RTS, now we can't wait to see how it looks in 3D with Xbox graphics.

The gameplay is hoped to be as open-ended and flexible as *Deus Ex*, which if pulled off, will ensure massive replay value.



↑ Huge outdoor levels have been created to set the scene for this adventure.



↑ Nova's world is one of shadow and stealth.



↑ Stalking the enemy from the shadows will be central to *StarCraft: Ghost*.



↑ The Protoss are short on numbers, but incredibly powerful.

BONUS INFO

»» IN THE BEGINNING...

Ghosts were specialist units available only to the Terrans. One of those Ghosts, Kerrigan, was betrayed to the Zerg forces, setting the scene for the *StarCraft* expansion pack, *Brood War*. Could a final showdown with Kerrigan be looming?

»» CONQUER THIS!

Electronic Arts had a similar spin-off on its *Command & Conquer* series with the release of *C&C Renegade*, though it was dismissed by critics for being offensively poor. Hopefully, *StarCraft Ghost* will fare better.

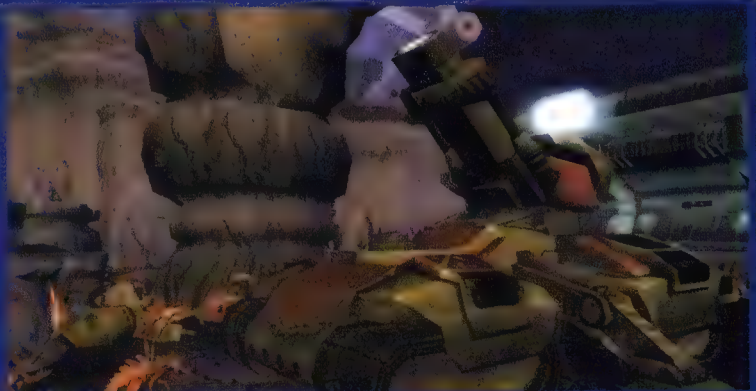


↑ Her most impressive skill is her ability to call in a nuclear strike. Get some distance between you first, though.

VEHICULAR ZERG-SLAUGHTER



The original *StarCraft* games relied heavily on vehicles, and you'll get to hijack and pilot a fair number of them in *StarCraft: Ghost*. The ones we have (kind of) confirmed at this point are the Wraith Flyer and the Vulture Grav-Cycle, and we know that you will be able to get in some slightly bigger, more heavily armed vehicles too. We also have it on good authority that the use of vehicles in the game should also expand the open-ended nature of tasks, and thinking outside the box should enable you to use otherwise inert vehicles as weapons, distractions, and hiding places.



↑ My, what a big cannon you have...

KINGDOM UNDER FIRE: THE CRUSADERS

Real-time strategy hits Xbox with full force

WORDS: GAVIN OGDEN

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: PHANTAGRAM

PUBLISHER: PHANTAGRAM

RELEASE DATE: MAY 2003

PLAYERS: 1

REMEMBER THAT incredible battle scene from the first *Lord of the Rings* film, where thousands of men, elves and orcs confronted each other in a ruck on an epic scale? And what about the opening skirmish from *Gladiator*? You can't help but think of those moments when *Kingdom Under Fire: The Crusaders* is running on Xbox. Literally hundreds of incredibly detailed warriors take each other on in an unfolding warscape.

The story of the Second Great War has become a bedtime story in the peaceful land of Bersia in the fifty years since it ended. The artefact that caused the war to break out, the Ancient Heart, is still missing. But trouble is once again brewing and the Sacred Land (where the Ancient Heart once resided) has been invaded by filthy, penny-pinching orcs.

Responding to this aggressive move quicker than George W. Bush, Bersia's king Hironeiden declares war on evil orc

leader Vellond, and soon his mighty forces begin their invasion on Hexter, the home of the orcs. Sensing this invasion, Ecclesia, another leader from a different town, is stirred into action in the name of protecting the Sacred Land. Who wins? Who finds the Sacred Heart? You decide.

Gameplay falls under the banner of real-time strategy (RTS), a style that rarely makes an appearance on a console because a keyboard and mouse are usually needed to issue the wide variety of commands used. An RTS game gives you control over every little detail - in this case, it's the epic battles that you'll be conducting. Think of games like *WarCraft*, and you're getting warm.

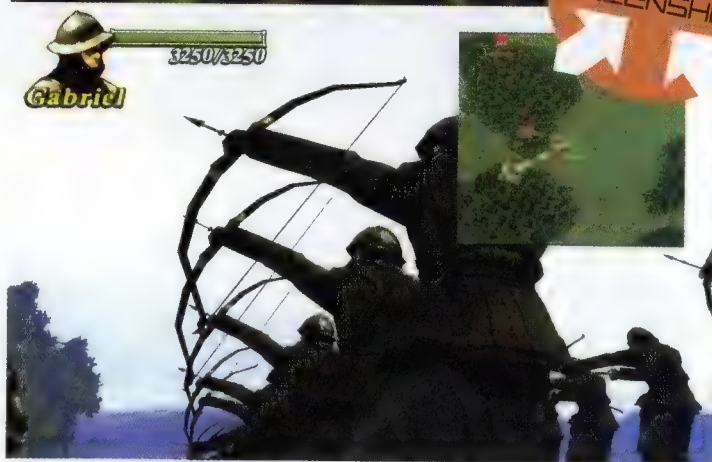
Early impressions suggest that play balancing will be a major issue for the developer. There's not much point having around 500 units going at it on one battlefield if the character you're playing as can just hack his or her way through the lot of them.

After all, this isn't a chop-'em-up in the style of *Gauntlet*. Playable characters should be powerful enough to overturn a losing battle, but not so powerful that one single warrior can destroy an entire army.

That said, carnage on a grand scale has to be the main reason for playing a game like *Kingdom Under Fire*. We'll know how it works out very soon. Stay with us for more.



EXCLUSIVE SCREENSHOTS



↑ On your command, they'll unleash hell.



↑ Take a breather behind the foliage before timing your attack.



↑ The map in the top right-hand corner shows you who and what to attack.



↑ Take part in huge battles on a scale rarely seen before on console.

BONUS INFO

ABOUT RACE

Players can choose one of four main characters, each from a different race, at the beginning of the game. Depending on the selection, you'll get to see the fight for the Ancient Heart from one of four different perspectives. Aside from different missions, game events will be presented in different 'moods', complete with unique cut scenes reflecting the race you've decided to lead.

WAR NOISES

With the superior sound capabilities of Xbox, you'll hear soldiers in the thick of battle shout commands at the top of their lungs instead of having to read dull text messages on the screen. And, of course, you'll get to hear pain. Lots of pain.



↑ Make sure you hit the spot first time, as reloading may take a while.

KNOW YOUR FOE

AS YOU BATTLE your way through various armies and foes in search of the Ancient Heart, there'll be several external elements that you need to consider in the quest for victory. The most important of these will be the experience points of your character. You'll also have to take into account the surrounding environment. For example, dazzling sunlight might hide an unseen army. Terrain height, density of soldiers and attack timing will all have to be taken into consideration. The last thing you need when you think it's all over is a second wave of orcs rushing you from out of the blue, screaming bloody murder.



↑ Diminishing light offers a tactical advantage.



↑ All together now: "He's behind you!"

SUDEKI

A new breed of epic role-playing

WORDS: GAVIN OGDEN

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: CLIMAX

PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 2003

PLAYERS: 1

▶ ONE OF Microsoft's huge announcements at the European press event, X02 (the other being the Rare deal), was the confirmation of development of the RPG *Sudeki*.

Massive in scale and ambition, the first screenshots single the game out as the kind of detailed, role-playing marathon Xbox gamers have been crying out for.

Playable characters include a female wizardress, a male gunslinger, a lethal swordsman and a skilled huntress - a foursome that pretty much covers all typical RPG bases.

It'll be possible to execute massive co-operative strikes using the magical powers of all four characters; quite how this will happen is unclear at present.

But as you'd expect, you will be able to forge your heroes into legends of the land by building up their skills as you progress through the world.

While many previous RPGs have featured a turn-based combat system, whereby you can only attack an enemy

when it's your turn, Climax has promised that *Sudeki* will feature real-time combat.

You'll be able to use dozens of moves, all wrapped up neatly in a cinematic Hong Kong-style with a dash of slow-motion bullet time for the special finishing moves.

One aspect yet to be fleshed out is the story. The game will be set in a world torn apart by deceit, a key plot point which will be addressed via a series of twists and turns as the game progresses.

A short video shown at X02 showcased some of the special effects-heavy combat, which was very impressive even at this early stage. Its maker is very proud of his team's early efforts.

"The cinematic combat in *Sudeki* has been created via a completely new system we have developed for the game we like to call 'one time'", said producer Mark Simmons.

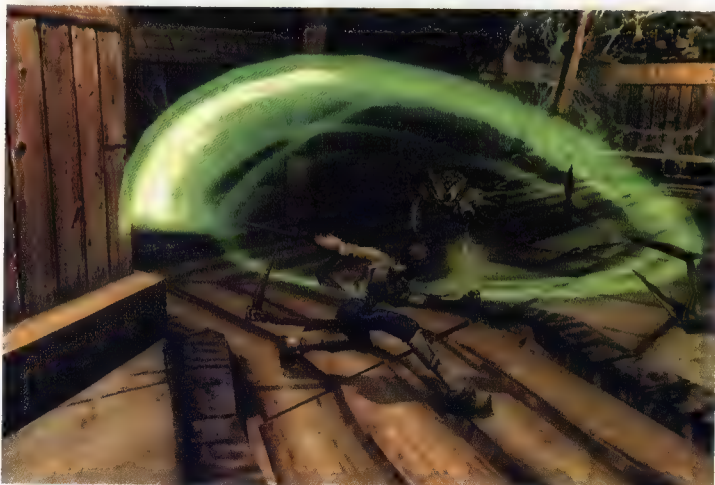
"It is the core feature that gives us the ability to do the most amazing, eye-popping cinematics during our biggest combat moves but all in real-time, fast paced action.

"The combat quite often can put you in situations of complete chaos, but you never feel out of control."

It's the feeling of being immersed in an expansive gaming world that *Sudeki* must also create. Early signs suggest it's doing exactly that.



↑ "By the power of Greyskull!"



↑ Slice and dice anything with two or more legs.



↑ End of level boss or target practice? Either way, it has to go.



↑ The bigger the sword, the deeper the cut.

BONUS INFO

BACK STORY

Climax was founded in 1998 and now has four development studios - growth that, in some part, is grounded in its early success with console conversions of PC hits such as *Theme Park World*, *Populous* and *Diablo*. Climax now operates in Fareham, Southsea, Brighton and Nottingham. The south coast studio was responsible for the excellent *Moto GP* (Issue 03, 8.7).

UNPRECEDENTED

A custom-made game engine has been created for Climax's work on *Sudeki*. It allows for detailed facial animation, bump mapping and complex lighting effects on a scale not seen before. Or so we're told.



↑ Expect an insane amount of special effects throughout the game.

YOU TALKIN' TO ME?



THE WORLD OF *Sudeki* will be absolutely *huuuuge*. The towns, cities, towers, dark fortresses and coastal villages briefly seen in the video are incredibly detailed. Each of these areas will be populated with hundreds of non-player characters (NPCs) that you can talk to during your quest. Treat them well and they should help you out a little. Treat them badly and, in traditional RPG style, your popularity rating will drop faster than that of the winner of a reality TV show.



↑ Lots of webs mean lots of spiders.



↑ It's a good thing you've got magical powers.



OUR VIEW

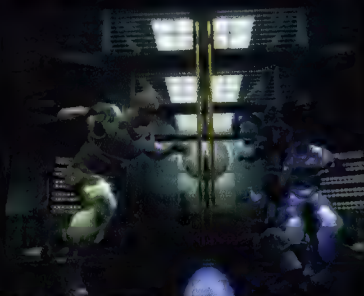
//NAME: OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE

//JOB: TO CUT TO THE CHASE AND TELL IT LIKE IT IS

The decision not to expand the classification regime for computer and videogames to include an R rating flies in the face of a great deal of research and public opinion. According to the Interactive Entertainment Association of Australia, 70% of the videogames market is over the age of 18, and 20% of the market is over the age of 39. Keeping videogames limited to a classification regime of MA15+ or less does not, in our opinion, properly serve the dual function of allowing the adult public to see whatever it wishes, and protecting those same people from seeing content they may find offensive.

Daryl Williams cites the interactive nature of videogames as the principle reason for the Federal Government's opposition to an R rating for videogames, the implication being that its effects are more potent than, say, the passive entertainment of television or film. Yet there is no proven connection between videogames and human behaviour. There is, in fact, as much evidence to suggest that passive entertainment like film and television is as dangerous as videogames, if not more, for the way they can program their audiences. People who play videogames are as likely to go out on a shooting rampage as the next person who's seen a violent film.

What's worse is that there's no appearance of consistency in the operation of the law. Unlike television, which has stricter controls for its free availability, videogames are purchased at one's election - much like magazines, videos and DVDs. All of those formats have classifications that extend up to the X rating. Why should videogames necessarily be limited to MA15+? Do the politicians fear they might open the floodgates, and that we'll be suddenly overrun by games that are graphically violent or sexually explicit?



↑ *Deathrow*: just scraped through.

It certainly hasn't happened on any other medium, nor in Japan, where adult-rated games have existed for years.

The recent banning of Acclaim's *BMX XXX* is an apt illustration of the dilemma. As the market demographic begins to age, it is bound to demand more content more suitably rated R than MA15+. An R rating for this game would've been appropriate in advising consumers that its contents are not suitable for people under the age of 18. However, since the game has been effectively banned, people will be likely driven to importing the uncensored version from the UK or New Zealand, where the game is freely available.

Despite the obvious points of contention, there two things to keep in mind. First, the lack of an R rating isn't going to change what kind of games are released in the slightest. Secondly, there is no right or wrong answer as to where video games stand as a medium of entertainment. It really comes down to who is in the position to make these decisions, and what their opinion is of the situation. They can be persuaded to change their minds through political lobbying, or you can simply vote them out of power in favour of someone who shares your views. Ain't democracy cool?



↑ *BMX XXX* - it would've been released if an R rating was in existence.

Headlines

SNAKES & LIZARDS

Very big lizards, in fact, in the prehistoric world of BC. PLUS new screenshots of *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance*.

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NUDE GAME FROM TOKYO

Some new games fresh out of Japan, plus some news from our man in Japan, AND a look at Climax's latest racer.

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RIGHT IN THE MUZZLE

Check out *Muzzle Flash*, a great looking first-person shooter out of Japan. PLUS news of *Moto GP* going Live!

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HOLY MOLEY!

Hot new rumours from the Mole's hidey-hole, and new info in *Black & White*. PLUS a new Spot the Shot comp.

026

UP TO YOUR NECK

How do we like our racing? With a twist, as explained to us by Razorworks as we go Inside: *Total Immersion Racing*.

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INSIDE THE BOX

A quick word from the head honcho himself about things to come. PLUS another ten reasons to love your Xbox.

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WIN FREE STUFF

Dynasty Warriors 3, *Phantom Crash*, and loads more to be won in a massive games giveaway worth over \$4000!

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HARDWARE IN FOCUS

The Xbox's boot-up sequence is explained this month. PLUS, find out if you were one of the winners for our competitions.

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THE RIGGER THE BETTER

Get to grips with your rig, make money driving it from town to town, and you'll be the daddy of *Big Mutha Truckers*.

034

X-MEDIA

The Lord of the Rings, *Futurama*, and *The Scorpion King*. PLUS all new weblinks and music CDs to check out.

036

LATEST CHARTS

Find out what the big hits are out in the stores, and what everyone's expecting. PLUS the latest release dates.

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LETTERS

Express your love for a game, vent your fury, ask your questions, have them answered - all here in this month's mail.

040



News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

HALO NETS AWARD DOUBLE

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) gave *Halo* two awards at the Interactive Entertainment Awards ceremony in London on October 10. Bungie's benchmark shooter, as hard to put down as Gav is at Rocky [guess who wrote this - Paul], scooped Games Console and Games Multiplayer awards, beating *Pikmin*, *GTA3* and *ICO* in the former category and *Super Monkey Ball*, *Dark Age of Camelot* and *Pro Evolution Soccer 2* in the latter.

ACTIVISION SWALLOWS LUXOFLUX

Continuing its string of acquisitions, publishing giant Activision has now acquired Luxoflux. The California-based developer is currently working on *True Crime: Streets of L.A.*, slated for an Xbox release sometime in 2003. Over the last year Activision has bought Treyarch (*Minority Report*), Gray Matter Studios (*Return to Castle Wolfenstein*) and Z-Axis (the *Dave Mirra* games). Who's next then?

DEAD TO RIGHTS SHOCKS JAPAN

Namco's bloody action game *Dead to Rights* has become the first game to receive an 18-certificate rating in Japan. The Xbox title is the first title from Namco's American subsidiary Hometek and features masses of bullet-time killing and gallons of gore. It's currently due for release in Australia early next year so, fingers crossed, we'll have the full review very soon.

CONTROLLER S SETS NEW STANDARD?

With announcements that new bundles from Microsoft will include the smaller Controller S came a flurry of reports that Microsoft may phase out the standard-sized pad. Controller S is based on the smaller Japanese pad and will be widely available in Australia from November 1. Microsoft made no comment before we went to press - so it's as much a surprise for us as well.

TRIBAL GATHERING

New shots from BC, where lizards are big and bikinis are small



HUGELY AMBITIOUS god game *BC* is still a long way from being playable (release is some time late next year) but new screens continue to emerge from developer Intrepid Computer Entertainment on a regular basis.

For those of you who missed the First Look in Issue 06 (hey, even if you did see it, bear with us, you can only learn new things) the game plans to

throw you into a fully living prehistoric world where players take control of a tribal leader.

As this figurehead, it's up to you to train and nurture your people so that they can fend for themselves in the brutally hostile prehistoric environments. You'll get to show them how to pick fruit for food and use big wooden sticks as spears. Don't expect big guns and flame ball power-ups here.

Each member of your tribe will have a unique personality and will react differently to various situations. So while one member might flee from a T-Rex, another might relish putting his life on the line to increase his status.

Ultimately, you struggle to dominate humans and then savage dinosaurs as you search for safe pastures. And yes professor, we *know* dinos were extinct way before mankind. But it's a game...



↑ It takes a guy tougher than Turok to face this beast with just a pointy stick.



↑ Back in those day, the ladies...

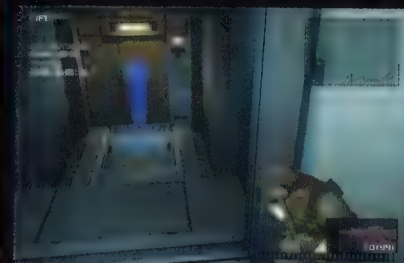


↑ ...were much prettier than the men.



SOFTWARE GIANT CAPCOM ANNOUNCES WACKY RACER CIRCUS DRIVE FOR XBOX IN JAPAN.

SNAKE SHOTS SNEAK OUT



↑ Play as Solid Snake or new characters.



↑ Meryl Silverburgh returns.

Proof that Solid looks harder on Xbox



CALL IT A FOLLOW-UP, call it a remix of the PS2's *MGS2* game, but *Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance* should be in a shop near you early next year. And if it isn't, then don't be surprised if there's trouble, as Solid Snake's debut on Xbox is already long overdue. *Substance*, as the name suggests, will feature more meat for your money in the form of five new Snake Tales and over 200 new VR missions.

According to creator Hideo Kojima, the VR missions allowed him to enhance the realism of the *Metal Gear* series with new guards, target ranges and many never-seen-before scenarios.

If that's not enough, there'll also be a further 100 alternative missions,

new costume changes and Snake's surprising debut on a skateboard. *MGS* goes extreme sports? Odd.

The story sees our hero getting hands-on with his latest arsenal of high tech weapons, gadgets and supplies. But it's up to you to use them (plus a little nous) to defeat an army of terrorists hell-bent on capturing a high-tech weapon with massive destructive powers called Metal Gear Ray.

Some recent reports from Japan have suggested that *Substance* could include a sneak peak at *Metal Gear Solid 3* while others have gone as far as hinting that Kojima's next *Metal Gear* title could be exclusive to Xbox. A Konami spokesperson wouldn't be drawn on the topic when contacted. Make of that what you will...



ATV2: QUAD POWER RACING

Renowned RTS completely changes for console debut

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: CLIMAX
PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM
RELEASE: EARLY 2003



MOVING FROM one racing genre to another, developer Climax, whose previous effort was the excellent *Moto GP*, is now working on something of a more off-road vein.

ATV2: Quad Power Racing puts players through the familiar exercise of picking a rider and a vehicle, and then

competing in a series of races.

ATV2 is less of a simulation than *Moto GP* and more like an arcade racer, but still benefiting from all the gorgeous visual trappings that made *Moto GP* such a vivid and blisteringly fast experience.

It's extremely fast, with the backgrounds bending and warping at the edge of the screen the faster you go. And as you go skidding around, splashing through puddles and riding up the sides of walls, bits of dirt and water will actually fall against the screen.

Acceleration and braking is oddly controlled exclusively with the right analogue stick, though, but that's likely to change. More as it comes.



↑ Riders can kick each other too!



↑ The helmet! It's blinded us!

TRUE FANTASY LIVE ONLINE

Microsoft talks us through its online RPG

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: LEVEL-5
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
RELEASE: SPRING 2003



ALTHOUGH MICROSOFT'S cel-shaded online RPG is in the early stages of development, a trailer showcasing the unique cartoon style of *TFLO* was a hit at TGS.

"There's a long history of RPGs in Japan dating right back to *Dragon Quest* and *Final Fantasy*, but Level-5 is going in a completely different direction," said Taro Hakodate, manager of games at Microsoft Japan.

"We want to produce a real fantasy world, not a cyber or futuristic world.

"Massively multiplayer online RPGs (MMORPGs) have been around for a while, but they've been on a mixed narrow and broadband infrastructure, so they can't have a huge traffic flow to the servers in their worlds. Xbox Live is broadband only, so we can send loads of data back and forth. In *TFLO*, you won't ever see the same character as you."

Director of marketing Takashi Sensui added: "There'll be a conventional scenario embedded in the game, but users can choose to achieve the objective in the story or just enjoy living in the world as their character."



↑ Incredible cartoon graphics.



↑ Armour plated, and then some...



N.U.D.E.
Natural Ultimate Digital Experiment

↑ Neatly understated design effort.

N.U.D.E.

Raise your very own female android

DEVELOPER: NED ENTERTAINMENT
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
RELEASE: TBA



ONE TITLE that isn't going to be online but will use the Xbox Communicator is a very Japanese game called *N.U.D.E.* This stands for Natural Ultimate Digital Experiment rather than 'stark naked' - of course it does - and the aim of the game is to raise a robotic android girl.

You'll decide how she grows and evolves and, using the Xbox Communicator, you'll be able to talk to her, much in the same way as the man-fish chat in Sega's Dreamcast game, *Seaman*.

Producer Ashida Shuntaro said: "Basically you have this female android servant. At first she knows absolutely nothing; she can't even say hello to you."

"But you speak to her via the Voice Communicator, nurture her and educate her until she is a fully functioning 'human being', fully able to express emotions."

"She eventually becomes your Personal Assist Secretary System."

N.U.D.E. is currently scheduled for release next spring in Japan, where it should go down very well due to its quirky nature and the presence of pretty young things totally at your beck and call. Sounds good...

State of Play



JAPAN



HI X-HEADS! The beta program test of Xbox Live in Japan has begun and 5,000 lucky gamers can join it from the middle of November.

Others have to wait until January 16 to buy it, so the postponement of Xbox Live's release is unfortunate.

But Japanese gamers will have a variety of games to choose from at launch next year.

I'm especially interested in *Muzzle Flash* from Victor Interactive Software (VIC). It's a Japanese-developed first-person shooter.

As you know the FPS is not so popular in Japan, and I've never played the final version of it, but the online play of the final game must go crazy, I feel.

Xbox Live is a perfect and excellent online game system, but I can see there being a problem for the Japanese market.

To set up an Xbox Live account you need a credit card. However, in Japan the credit card is not popular. Some people don't want one or don't want to use one.

This is a really different situation compared with the western world. Maybe it's just a Japanese custom.

If Microsoft wants to succeed with the Japanese consumer, it has to prepare another payment method - prepaid card or charging directly from bank accounts.

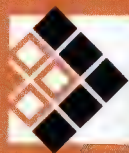
Yes, Xbox Live in Japan definitely has a few problems, but there will be *Tekki* [Steel Battalion] and *True Fantasy Live Online*.

They must be the killer titles of online console gaming. You agree with me, don't you?

Koji Aizawa
Editor-in-Chief
Famitsu Xbox



↑ Steel Battalion is going Live.



News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

CAFÉ DEL XBOX

The latest Xbox promotion to hit Japan is the Xbox Café in Tokyo. Aside from slurping various brands of coffee while reading the papers, visitors can play on eight Xbox demo pods wired up to plasma TVs in full Dolby 5.1 surround sound. Microsoft will also be giving away free Xbox goodies while the café is open until the end of December.

GREAT, ANOTHER RACER FOR XBOX

Rockstar Games has officially announced it is nearing completion of *Midnight Club II*, the sequel to one of its PlayStation 2 launch titles. The title is being concurrently developed for PlayStation 2, Xbox and PC, with the PlayStation 2 version scheduled for release in February 2003. The Xbox and PC versions should come shortly thereafter, hopefully around Autumn. Despite being a launch title on PS2, the original *Midnight Club* wasn't particularly flash. Frankly, we'd rather they'd bring a *Grand Theft Auto* game to Xbox.

MYST FORECAST UNTIL 2008

Ubi Soft has extended its partnership with Cyan Worlds to publish new games from the *Myst* series right the way through to 2008. Rand Miller, co-creator of *Myst* and founder of Cyan Worlds, will continue to play a central role in further developing the series. The new games will follow on from *Riven*, the sequel to *Myst* and *Myst III: Exile* (Issue 08, 7.2).

2003: A SPACE ODYSSEY REMIX

Midway's upcoming remake of classic retro shoot-'em-up *Defender* will feature a cover version of Richard Strauss's *Sprach Zarathustra*, better known as the theme song from the 1968 movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The song has been given a banging techno makeover by KMFDM and is called *Defender*. We've heard it and it's very good indeed. Electronica artist Trigger will also provide the game with an original track by the name of *Vault*. Look for our full review of *Defender* next issue.

MOTO GP ONLINE

Sequel to the Elite racer goes to Xbox Live



WORD HAS JUST come through that *Moto GP* will be part of the Xbox Live Starter Pack in the UK, which is great news as there's every chance for the title to be filtered down to the Australian market. The game's been widely hailed as the best racing game on Xbox after we reviewed it (Issue 03, 8.7), and it should be even better once it's equipped with Xbox Live functionality.

Jon Gibson, lead designer at developer Climax Brighton, said: "The version you get with the Starter Pack includes ten riders and three tracks - Assen, Saschenring and Mugello. If you have a *Moto GP* save on your hard drive, that will unlock all the other tracks for use

on Xbox Live too, so it's a really good chance for us to promote the game."

Gibson is as impressed with Xbox Live as everyone else we've spoken to. "It's a great service," he said, "and definitely the best online gaming service I've ever seen."

"Everything from the friend lists to the voice communication works incredibly well. Before we got to work on the game, we were unsure if we'd be able to have a full field of 16 racers online, but we've managed it".

So not only do you get a full field of racers but you'll also be able to chat to the guys directly in front and behind you as you race. Keep your fingers crossed for an Australian version.



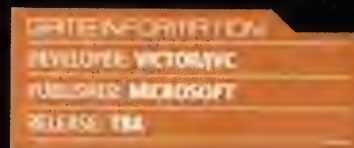
↑ Choose your Xbox Live options.



↑ Your saved game will work online!

MUZZLE FLASH

Seek and destroy in teams - online



BILLED AS A military-based third-person tactical shooter, *Muzzle Flash* is set to be a January 2003 launch title for Xbox Live in Japan. Up to eight players will be able to hop online with the simple objective of finding the enemy and taking them out.

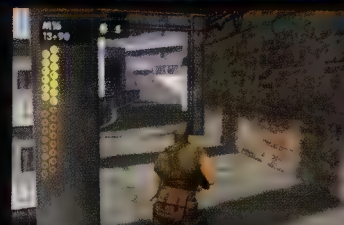
Obviously, the Xbox Communicator will play a major part in co-ordinating team attacks.

The early version demonstrated at TGS only showed a desert scenario littered with scattered ruins. But in the final game each map will include a variety of tactical vantage points.

All the usual warfare environments will feature, from frozen Arctic wastes to bug-infested jungles.

Playable characters only have one speed, which was a sort of casual stroll: not really what you want when you're stranded in the open with several players all firing at you.

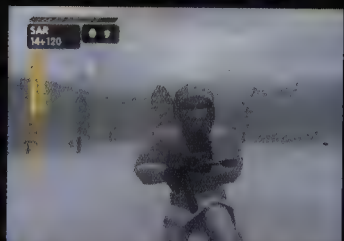
It still needs a bit of work at this early development stage, but with the emphasis more on stealth and tactics, *Muzzle Flash* could creep up and surprise everyone in its finished version.



↑ Urban warfare.



↑ The desert level shown at TGS.



↑ "Gimme that Thermos - NOW!"



↑ It could be a big hit on Xbox Live.



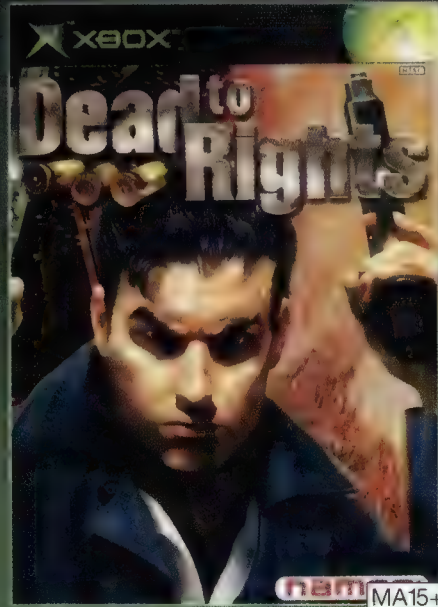
↑ This sniper still has a bit of work to do.

HOTTEST DEALS NO TRADE IN REQUIRED

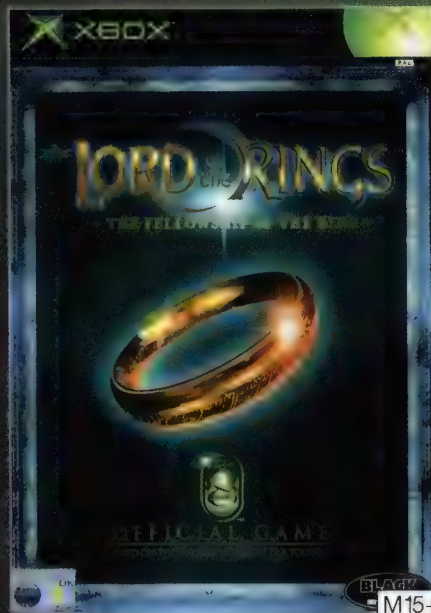
CHECK OUT OUR HUGE RANGE OF NEW RELEASE AND CLASSIC TITLES INSTORE



Available mid January.

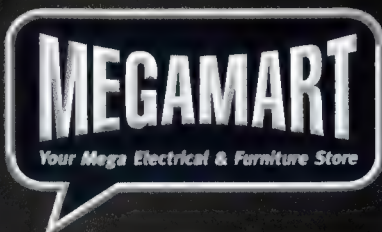


Available late January.



GAMES CLASSIFICATIONS: G8+ - General (8 years and over). M15+ - Mature (recommended for persons 15 years and over).
MA15+ - Restricted (restricted for sale to persons 15 years and over, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian).

Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer.
Offer ends 22nd January 2003.



MYER



GPB:0000:4131/MW5456/XM



INCOMING

News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

LORD HAVE MERCENARY

Soldier of Fortune II: Double Helix, Activision's PC gorefest of a first-person shooter, is coming to Xbox Live. Multiplayer modes so far confirmed include deathmatch, elimination and infiltration, all of which appeared in the PC version, but on Xbox you'll be able to control the action vocally with the Xbox Communicator. The game was announced at Microsoft's X02 event in Seville on September 24 and a release is expected in 2003.

MALICE MISSES 2002

Argonaut's platformer *Malice* was in development long before Xbox was available and yet a release date still isn't any closer. Publisher Vivendi Universal has again confirmed that it has slipped, this time to February 2003. Hopefully Argonaut will use the time to tweak the game, as it currently fits into the pigeon hole marked 'standard platform game'. This is all disappointing since *Malice* was originally used by Microsoft to demonstrate the power of Xbox. Argonaut's other Xbox title, *SWAT: Urban Justice*, has also slipped to next year.

DUKES OF HAZZARD SKIDS INTO VIEW

Ubi Soft has revealed plans to release a series of games based on happy hillbilly TV action series *The Dukes of Hazzard*. The company has yet to release any actual information on what we can expect, but we can only hope that whatever direction the game follows, it turns out better than the previous *Dukes of Hazzard* game Ubi Soft distributed for the now defunct publisher and developer SouthPeak Interactive.

SEGA'S XBOX SURPRISE

Sega has revealed that the forthcoming Xbox-exclusive gun shooter *The House of the Dead III* will include secret stages from *The House of the Dead II*. The levels will open up once the main game is finished. There are also rumours of *Panzer Dragoon Orta* hiding the original *Panzer Dragoon* somewhere, but we've yet to hear anything official from Sega.



TOP SECRET:

THE MOLE

Diving for rumour pearls at X02

SERIAL THRILLER

While I was engrossed in testing Xbox Live, I overheard some very interesting news on my Xbox Communicator regarding some secret Microsoft plans. The company is looking at releasing episodic-only titles, games where you download levels on a regular basis rather than shelling out for one full game.

Microsoft has a few of these 'episodically-inspired' games in development right now. Look for details of two massively multiplayer games, one of which is being billed by Microsoft suits as a first-of-its-kind shooter. This shooter is likely to be the first of the games announced, in the not-too-distant future. Remember where you heard it first.

CARTOON CARS SOON?

Capcom's cel-shaded cartoon racing PS2 game *Auto Modellista* has been causing quite a stir with its lovely visuals and arcade gameplay. Well, a little bird recently let slip to me that there's more than just a good chance that us Xbox-loving gamers might get our hands on the game after all. There's been a lot of talk of a sequel lately and it wouldn't surprise me if the new version appears



↑ *Auto Modellista* (PS2), top; *Godzilla* (GameCube), bottom. Both coming to Xbox?

on Xbox sometime next year, and because Capcom is impressed with Xbox Live there might even be some online play. I'll keep you posted on this one.

UP FROM THE DEPTHS

My larger-than-life but very undercover sources have revealed to me that the upcoming GameCube monster mash-

em-up, *Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee* is hotly tipped to come to Xbox. In the Infogrames smash-it-up you get to control some mighty monsters such as *Godzilla 2000*, *Mechagodzilla*, *King Ghidorah* and *Mothra*. The idea is to crush your enemy by throwing your opponents across cities, causing as much devastation as possible.



SEGA IS BRINGING CLASSIC MEGA DRIVE, SATURN AND DREAMCAST GAMES TO XBOX.

GOOD GOD?

You've the chance to be one - back in *Black & White*



UNDER THE WATCHFUL gaze of famed designer Peter Molyneux, Lionhead Studios has revamped

Black & White, its adventure-cum-RPG that saw players raise and train a creature to be the most powerful in the land, while convincing the land's residents to worship at its feet.

The idea is still the same in *Black & White: Next Generation*, but rather than using a floating hand to carry out your actions as in the PC version, you now directly control a character and its creature as the duo explore various lands, casts miracles, solves puzzles and take on other gods.

But only by gaining more followers can you pull off the really big miracles and become more powerful. You and your creature need to persuade local townsfolk to bow down to your every move.



↑ New *B&W* set-up - man on beast.

Giving the people supplies like wood and food will convince them to worship your way of life but, on the other hand, beating them into submission will force them to obey you. But violence solves no problems.

What's really clever is that the game will visually morph to reflect your style. If you're a good guy the world will be green, lush and colourful but if you turn to the dark side the word becomes dark and desolate.

SPOT THE SHOT

Let the eye-peeling begin!

TELL US which page and which game the screenshot shown below is taken from, and a stash of games goodies could be yours. Send your entries to: *Spot The Shot 10*, Official Australian Xbox Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1555. Or email staff@oxm.com.au with 'Spot The Shot 10' as the subject. This comp closes on January 21.



WIN!

MILLA JOVOVICH

MICHELLE RODRIGUEZ

A secret experiment. A deadly virus. A fatal mistake.

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PD4309



IN MY OPINION

"Bread and Circuses"

THE CROWD SURGES, cheering, jeering. Imported British MCs prowling the stage, egging the bystanders on. Nearly a thousand men and women gorge themselves on satay skewers, midori cocktails, gin, and scotch. Beer swilling middle managers rub shoulders with teenaged clerks. Young, old, savvy, clueless, they all gaze in awe as brand new video games, their shrink-wrap glistening, are thrown down to gleeful, clutching hands.

It's a rave. The "Xbox Retail Rave". This is a side of the gaming industry seldom seen by the general public, but it's very real. Australian gamers spend half a billion on their hobby every year, putting trust in august journals like this one when choosing what to buy. But they can only buy something if it's on retail shelves. Thus retail buyers and managers at KMarts and Harvey Normans across the country must be treated carefully by any company selling games.

Microsoft was selling as hard as it could that night. With the Massive Entertainment Pack, an obvious loss leader, they're hurling games at the Aussie public. Good games, mind. But lures nonetheless. Glistening freebies to convince us all that the Xbox is real, and more than a match for PS2. Which it is. But anyone who studies the sales charts could be forgiven for thinking otherwise.

It was an advertising smart bomb, the diametric opposite of terrorism. By filling a dance hall with the most influential retailers in the metropolitan area, and pumping them full of food, drink, and hope, the Xbox crew was out to win the battle for Christmas. So here's a little experiment: look under the tree, and see how they did.

Sharaz Jek is an independent journalist. His views do not necessarily reflect those of Official Australian Xbox Magazine.



INSIDE

TOTAL IMMERSION RACING

Diving head first into the racer with real attitude



WE'VE ALL HEARD the one about "creating a racing game with a difference", but in this case, it might be true. What developer Razorworks feels is unique about *Total Immersion Racing* is the AI of the drivers. When you race, you'll 'see' the attitude of CPU-controlled cars change as you overtake and cut them up.

An icon system will show the state of mind of your opponents on the grid, the idea being to make the game feel like you're racing against real players, where your racing style genuinely affects those other drivers. When you progress through championships, rivalries and even bonds should develop.

It's a very interesting idea, but one that needs to be correctly executed if it's to offer anything genuinely new. With that in mind, we gave the game's creative director Kevin Bezzant the chance to explain just how *TIR* will tackle it.

Official Australian Xbox Magazine:
How long has Razorworks been working on the game and how did the idea for it originally come about?

Kevin Bezzant: We've been working on *Total Immersion Racing* since November 2000. We looked at the contemporary racing games around then and what real racing events appealed to us and started from there, basically.

The racing focuses on multi-category racing, much like Le Mans and ALMS [American Le Mans Series] events.

The races include GT, GTS and Prototype classes and you race within your car's class but the overall event has a large field of cars which makes the racing element different.

For example, if you're racing in a Prototype car, after a few laps you'll start hitting traffic which adds some strategic element to the racing.

What about the driver AI?

The drivers and cars are treated as separate entities. The cars are physical entities but the drivers are emotional entities in that they actually drive using acceleration, steering, braking and gear inputs, as the player would.

Each driver has strengths and weakness for qualities such as stamina, judgement, composure and track knowledge. Some of these will change during a race, depending on the interactions that occur with other drivers.

In addition, the drivers have emotional states that change during a race and affect their performance.

What are the emotional states, and how do they appear in the game?

There are basically three different states: aggression, confidence and defensiveness.

"RACES ARE UNSCRIPTED AND INVOLVING BECAUSE OF THE CHANGING EMOTIONAL STATES OF DRIVERS"



↑ CPU will get you back in return for rough treatment.

↑ Dut driver AI will (hopefully) single this game out.



↑ Potentially dangerous driving may work in your favour if your confidence is increased by a ballsy move.



↑ Looks like Purple Boy on the left is in an aggressive emotional state...

Aggression increases if the driver is blocked, forced off the track or another driver makes contact with them.

A driver's confidence increases as he successfully blocks, overtakes and forces other driver into errors. Drivers will become defensive on the last lap or in pressure situations and will try to protect the racing line.

Acute aggression will lead to drivers bearing grudges against each other, carrying over from race to race. We believe these emotional states make the races unscripted and more involving, and as rivalries develop so the competition will increase.

How will players notice the emotions 'showing' when they're driving?

Players should notice that AI drivers are not perfect and are fallible and can be forced into making errors - much the same as we do when we see the red mist. The driver emotion element is the most significant difference between *TIR* and other racing games.

Tell us about the game's career mode. Is this where players will spend most of their time?

I'd think so. The career mode begins with the player choosing a low-order

GT team and racing a season in the hope to impress team managers from better GT teams or higher-class teams. The overall idea is to progress through to the high-ranking Prototype teams to become outright champion.

How many tracks and cars are there?

There are eight main tracks with variations of each. Some of the tracks are based on real environments and we have created some.

Overall, there are 17 licensed vehicles to drive. Of course, there are also secret cars and challenges to find and unlock as you go through the game.

How have you approached the handling of the cars in the game?

Our physics engine allows us to tune the cars so that they behave as you might expect. For instance, you will notice differences between two and four wheel drive cars and between front, mid and rear engine cars.

The cars do get progressively trickier to master as you progress through the ranks, which is what you would expect of any racing game.

That said, they also get much faster, too.

State of Play



UNITED STATES



I'VE SEEN A cool video floating around the Internet lately. It has the Japanese character

'Domo-Kun' dancing to the hypnotic beat of Steve Balmer's chant of "Developers! Developers! Developers! Developers!". The video is pretty funny for what it is, as the character emulates Balmer accurately, but lately it's been much easier to see what he's so damned excited about.

Xbox Live is up and running here, and it's doing very well so far. What's even better is that the different Live-enabled titles (save *Whacked*) seem to be selling at pretty even rates. Titles like *Ghost Recon*, *Mech Assault*, and *Unreal Championship* are obviously leading the charge, but it's the wealth of sports titles that put the cherry on top.

Much can be said about whether or not 'Broadband Only' was really the way to go. Despite the fact that many 56k-ers are left in the lurch, the people who are on the Live network have it quite good when it comes to latency issues. Microsoft is also controlling the amount of Xbox Live kits that hit the shelves in order to keep server performance quality high and latency issues low.

Many people are still anxious to give it a go, obviously. As for me, I probably won't log on that much, if at all. That might change if Microsoft ever releases a patch for the 'screaming pre-teen Dragon Ball Z pro-wrestling fans', though.

For those of you looking for an awesome single player romp we just got *Splinter Cell* and *Panzer Dragoon Orta*, and we're loving it. I'm more of a *Rainbow Six* junkie than a *Panzer Dragoon* fan. Rail shooters just never caught on with me, though, but the demo that's been out in the US is very impressive from a technical standpoint.

Kakuto Chojin on the other hand.... we'd best leave that little stinker unsaid.

Ryan Thompson
US Correspondent



Inside the Box



AS WE COUNT down the last few days to Christmas, we can rest assured that Xbox has definitely made a good impression on Australia. The last few weeks have been some of the biggest weeks in gaming ever.

The past month has seen the launch of some huge things for gaming. The Xbox Massive Entertainment Pack was launched and was extremely well received (over 10,000 packs were sold in the first week alone!) plus one of the most anticipated titles of 2002 was launched exclusively on Xbox with an awesome response. *Splinter Cell* launched on November 29, and we couldn't help our excitement when Ubi Soft told us that it would be exclusive to Xbox for 2002.

Also, our Microsoft Game Studios portfolio grew with the launches of *Mech Assault*, *Whacked!*, *Blinx*, *NFL Fever 2003* and *Quantum Redshift*. Xbox's games portfolio just keeps getting better!

Things will not be quietening down either. Once Christmas is out of the way we can all start counting down to one of the most highly anticipated Xbox-exclusive titles. And if this title hasn't got you excited yet, then, well, clearly you are not a fan of...volleyball. *Dead or Alive Extreme Beach Volley Ball* will hit Aussie shelves in February - and we have the date clearly marked on our *Dead Or Alive Extreme Beach Volley Ball* calendar. *DOA XBV* won't be alone on the shelves: it will be accompanied by one of the most beautiful games coming to Xbox in 2003 - *Panzer Dragoon Orta*.

Other titles to look out for after Christmas is over include *Metal Gear Solid Substance*, *Dead to Rights*, *House of the Dead 3*, *Return to Castle Wolfenstein*, *Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance*, and *Indiana Jones*.

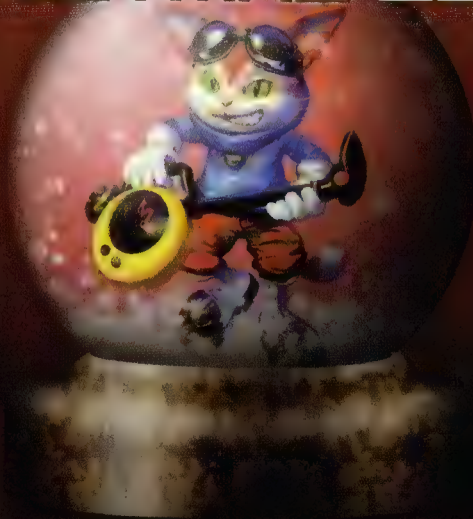
Awsome titles, on the most powerful console... but I don't need to tell you about the power of Xbox do I?

Happy Xboxing!

Alan Bowman
Regional Director Xbox



REASONS WHY XBOX MAKES CHRISTMAS BETTER



WORDS: CAMERON DAVIS

The Yuletide season is here again, but this is the first one that has Xboxes in it

YOU GET BETTER PRESENTS

10 Your aunts and uncles never know what to get you for Christmas, but they do know that you have an Xbox. With a bit of luck, they'll get you an Xbox game instead of a lifetime supply of corduroy socks. Heck, even *Transworld Surf* is better than another polo shirt.

YOU GET A BIGGER BOX FOR CHRISTMAS

9 Most parents will tell you that the size of a yuletide present doesn't matter. This is clearly wrong. Whoever has the biggest gift-wrapped boxes under the tree wins, and those who get an Xbox will have the edge on everyone else.

IT WILL BRING THE FAMILY TOGETHER

8 Tired of being dragged into the wilderness for that boring yearly Christmas / New Year vacation? Educate the family to the wonders of multiplayer gaming on Xbox. Get your folks into the multiplayer action of *Halo* or *Fuzion Frenzy*, and you'll enjoy all the benefits of family bonding without having to be bored out of your mind playing Scrabble by a swamp.

BRAGGING RIGHTS

7 Xbox is in many ways better than the other consoles on the market. Logic dictates that whoever gets an Xbox has the best bragging rights when it comes time to get back the regular work or school routine. All the more reason to get a second machine, then.

THE CHANCES OF "SANTA" GETTING STUCK IN THE CHIMNEY IN AN AMUSING MANNER ARE HIGHER

6 Santa is big. Xbox is not tiny. Both are trying to come down through your chimney (or through your window) at the same time. The logistics of this mean that the chances of either Saint Nick (or a foolhardy relative dressed as him) getting stuck while delivering the gifts are pretty good, so get the camera ready. Feel free to send us pictures.

YOU GET SOME SNOW

5 Tired of watching yuletide movies and TV shows that are covered in a thick blanket of snow that we never see here in sunny Australia? At least with titles like *Amped* and the winter sections of *Blinx the Time Sweeper*, you get to enjoy a white Christmas.

CAROLS SUCK

4 How do otherwise normal people tolerate listening to Silent Night over and over again for a whole month? We don't know and frankly we don't care. Rip your favourite tracks to the Xbox, hook the console up to the stereo and drown out the carols. Your grandparents will be too scared of the system to try and change things, and you get to enjoy the music for once.

HAPPY ALTERNATIVE

3 What if you're one of those people who just doesn't celebrate Christmas? Instead of going a bit Kyle's Mom on

everyone, just chill out and enjoy some non-denominational gaming. Everyone can enjoy video games no matter what they think of the whole Christmas thing.

XBOX + GULLIBLE RELATIVES = EASY CASH

2 So, you got an Xbox under the tree and you need to scrape up cash to buy *Splinter Cell* because the copy of *Simpsons Road Rage* your Aunt Ethel bought you, quite frankly, sucks. Sticky tape a cardboard box to the back of the Xbox, making sure to cut a five millimetre wide by 5 centimetre slot in the front. Now tell your visiting cousins that the console is so much like an arcade machine that it even needs dollar coins to play. When they deposit the cash, hit Start and hand them the controller. Repeat the process until you're rich.

IT TEACHES YOU THE REAL SPIRIT OF THE SEASON

1 Christmas is about giving (damage in *Deathrow*). It's about sharing (which is why there are four controller ports). It's about being close to the ones you love (and beating them soundly in *FIFA*). It's about getting presents you enjoy all year (just like the downloadable content through Xbox Live). It's about crass commercialisation (is there any reason to explain the existence of *Bruce Lee*?). Of course, it's also about ham (...we like ham). Xbox: the holidays are just meaningless without it. Enjoy!

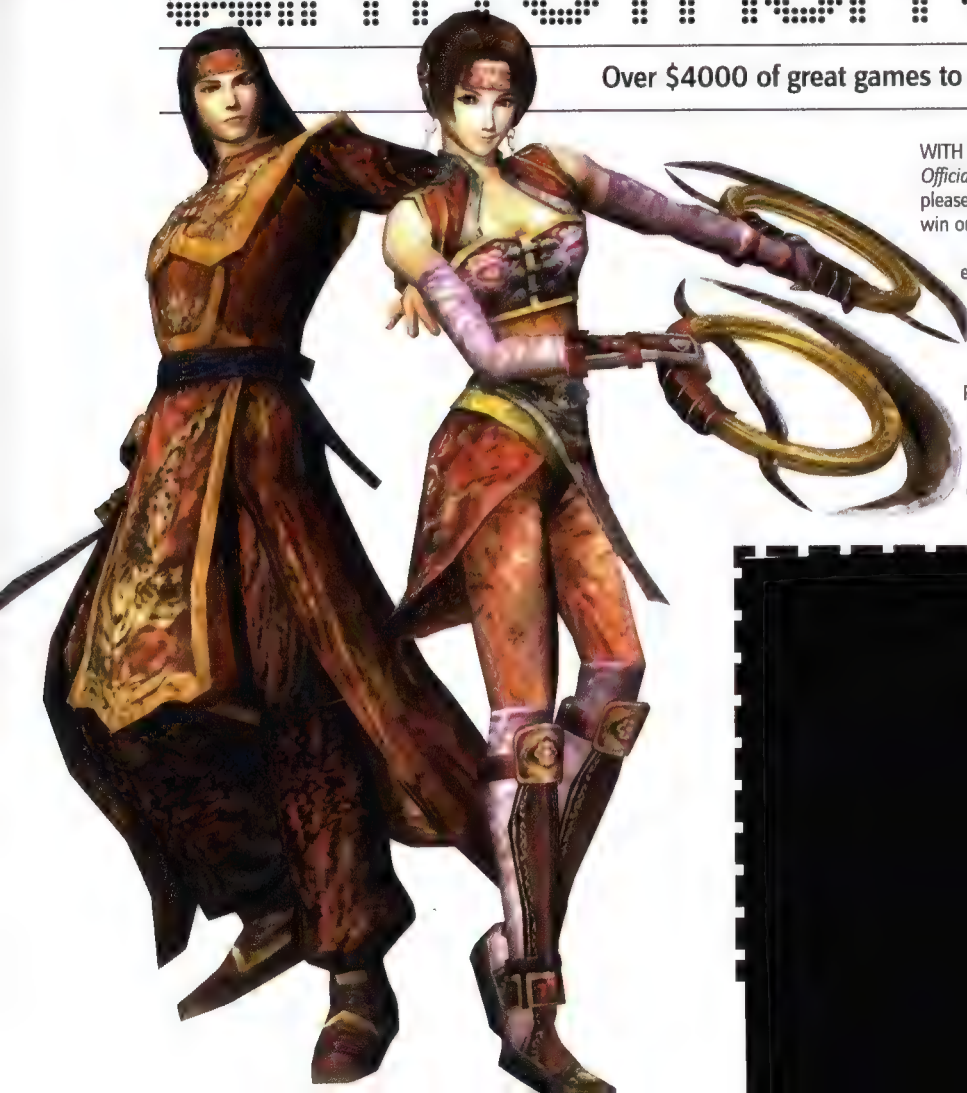
WIN

FREE STUFF!



WIN A STASH OF GAMES!

Over \$4000 of great games to be won - perfect for the holiday season!



WITH THANKS to THQ Asia Pacific, the Official Australian Xbox Magazine is pleased to offer its readers the chance to win one of five amazing bundles of games.

Each bundle comes with eight (8) excellent games, including *Phantom Crash* and *Marvel Vs Capcom 2*.

To enter, fill out the entry form below and send it to: Massive THQ Pack, Official Australian Xbox Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355. To be eligible, entries must get to us by January 21, or else they'll be binned.

YOU CAN WIN!

THERE ARE FIVE PRIZE PACKS TO BE WON, EACH CONTAINING:

- ☐ Phantom Crash
- ☐ Dynasty Warriors 3
- ☐ Chase
- ☐ Marvel Vs Capcom 2
- ☐ Reign of Fire
- ☐ Metal Dungeon
- ☐ Toxic Grind
- ☐ Black Stone: Magic & Steel



INCOMING

State of Play



UK



SHHH. BE VEWVWY quiet. I'm huntin' Eastern European terrorists. No, faithful readers, I haven't suddenly joined MI6, I'm just totally immersed in the latest Xbox killer app: *Splinter Cell*.

Caution is the order of the day. Darkness your ally. Sam Fisher is indeed a bad-ass, but that doesn't mean he can (or should) waltz through the levels punching and shooting my way through, Schwarzenegger-style. There's something oddly rewarding about sneaking around totally undetected. Maybe it's using all the fancy, almost-real-but-not-quite gadgets to peek around corners or distract the disturbingly clever guards. There really is nothing like slipping a fibre-optic camera under a door to check on guard positions in any other video game - but there should be.

Of course, keeping to the shadows isn't too hard, despite the dynamic lighting model. I do try to stay away from knocking the other systems, but damn - I'd love to see the PS2 and GameCube ports come close to the sumptuous visuals on offer here. Both are powerful systems with an array of tricks, but the quality of the whole package is staggering. It's absolutely gorgeous. The lighting, the models, it all comes together. Slip on the night vision goggles and everything is bathed in that green glow you remember from countless movies. Wonderful.

Another bright spot on the horizon are a pair of surprisingly good titles based on two hot British licenses: *Harry Potter and the*



HARDWARE IN FOCUS

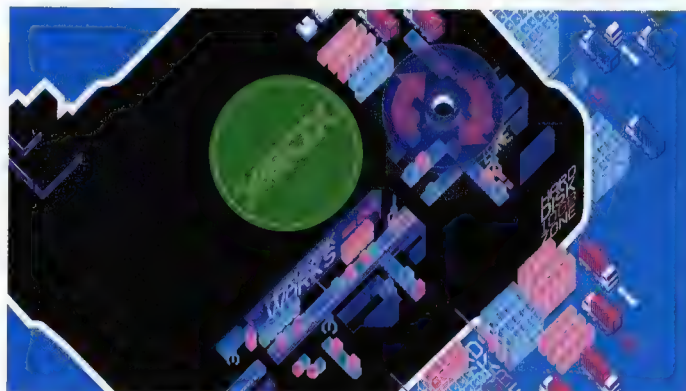
Matt Wolfs dives into that oft-overlooked little diddy called a boot sequence.



SO YOU OPEN your Xbox's disc drive and insert your favourite game. You wait briefly for the game to load, during which you are greeted with a friendly title screen. Next stop? Fun. But does anyone actually know what happens during those brief seconds before the game starts? You might be surprised by the facts.

Once the Xbox is powered on, the system software (based on a modified version of the Windows 2000 kernel) is decompressed out of ROM into RAM. Once there, the system software initialises the Xbox hardware (audio, video, DVD etc), which is when you see the Xbox logo and the start-up sound. There's no sound or video drivers stored within the Win2K kernel, so this is done by going directly to the registers of the NV2A and MCPX chips. This is done within the one second between switching on the Xbox and the running of the boot-up sequence.

The software will then determine what kind of media is in the DVD drive. If it's a game, it will be loaded into RAM, and the game signature is checked to ensure it's an authentic



↑ There's a lot more happening within the guts of the Xbox than you can see!

copy. The game developer, publisher and license bitmaps are then loaded and displayed in sequence, during which the game information is being streamed off the DVD into RAM.

Once the game is stored into memory, the system software starts the game. At this point the kernel is acting in conjunction with the Xbox title libraries (win32 subset, DX8 subset, audio/video driver, USB, network stack etc) to provide the basic services for the

game itself. From there on in, it's games-playing time.

If the software detects no media within the DVD drive, the Xbox Dashboard is run, taking us to the familiar set-up screens so we can tweak the PAL50/60 settings, widescreen, audio output, and jukebox functions.

So there you go. Be thankful things are so simple to operate from the outside, because what goes on in the background is quite complicated.



OAXM WINNERS!

PUT YOUR MARK ON AFL LIVE 2003!

Pay a visit to www.ebay.com.au!



The Brisbane Lions may have won the last AFL flag but the next season has already started on eBay Australia. Right now, Xbox gamers are picking up copies of the number one selling game, AFL Live 2003, for as little as \$75, a saving of

\$25 off retail! Get onto www.ebay.com.au and enjoy the thrill of kicking the winning goal. When your AFL days come to an end, you can sell it on eBay to fund a new gaming challenge. But if armchair football is not your thing, eBay will get you kicking the footie in no time, log on to www.ebay.com.au for all your footy gear and memorabilia.

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Register. It's easy and it's free. Anyone can browse the site but to buy or sell you must register first.

How do I sell? The selling process is quick and easy. eBay has many onsite tools to help you list your first item.

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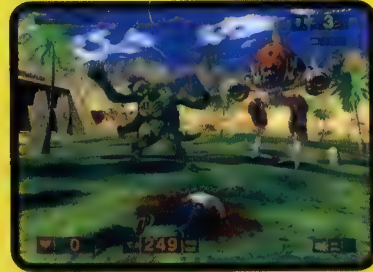
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WHEN EVERYONE
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The Man. The Wisdom. The Legend. Now on XBOX.

Evil forces? Whatever. For you, it's just an excuse to quit holding back. Terrifying weapons, amazing levels and unbelievable power are yours to mess with. Don't play too nice, though. These enemies are so powerful, they make any you've faced before seem like naughty schoolchildren. It's time to start dishing out some serious punishment.

www.serioussam.com



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News Wire

Easily digestible nuggets of key Xbox information

GET IN THE RING

Microsoft is making an Xbox-exclusive wrestling title with the working title of *The Wild Rings*. Naturally, this grapple pie is said to feature a huge choice of beefcakes dressed in brightly coloured Spandex. More importantly, the final game will feature full online multiplayer fighting over Xbox Live and players will be able to store a stable of up to 50 homemade wrestlers on their hard disks. Look for a release towards the end of 2003.

DEAD OR ALIVE OR NOTHING

Talk of which platform would secure the next instalment of Tecmo's top-heavy *DOA* fighting series has been rife since the game was announced in the summer. At the recent Tokyo Game Show, it was announced that the beat-'em-up will follow in the footsteps of *DOA3* and be exclusive to Xbox. The fourth game currently goes under the working title of *Dead or Alive: Code Kronos*.

MARVEL AT THE MULTIPLAYER

A massively multiplayer online game featuring the inhabitants of the Marvel universe will be released in 2005 by Vivendi Universal Publishing. Following a deal with Marvel Enterprises, VUP plans to create and launch a huge online game based around classic heroes like Spider-Man, The Hulk and The Silver Surfer. Further details have yet to be announced, but keep your eyes fixed on future issues of the mag for the latest updates.

NO XBOX LIVE IN JAPAN UNTIL 2003

Microsoft confirmed that Xbox Live won't launch before Xmas in Japan. Instead, the service will debut on January 16, 2003. The Japanese Xbox Live Starter Kit will include *Phantasy Star Online* and the Xbox Communicator. The current crop of games marked for Xbox Live in Japan includes *Live Fishing Online*, *Thousand Land*, *Capcom Vs. SNK EO*, *Whacked!*, *Midtown Madness 3* and *True Fantasy Online*.



↑ Pay close attention to the damage meter in the top right-hand corner at all times.

BIG MUTHA TRUCKERS

Rednecks run rampage on the open road

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: EUTECHNIX

PUBLISHER: EMPIRE INTERACTIVE



THE IDEA BEHIND *Big Mutha Truckers* is pretty simple: drive a big truck from city to city making your fortune by

completing challenges and buying and selling various goods along the way. In practice, though, it's anything but simple. Because as you're hauling some valuable cargo through the different cities, every biker, redneck and bent police officer will try to slow you down and steal your load.

You begin at BMT Inc., your headquarters. Here you can speak to Momma to find out how you're doing against your sibling rivals (two brothers and a sister) and get a replacement rig should your old one be hijacked during your travels.

There are five different cities to check out: Skeeters Creek, Greenback, Smokestack Heights, Capital City and Salt

Sea City. Each city has a bar, a store and a garage. At the bar, you can talk to the bar staff and gain valuable information on the particular needs of a city. The bars are home to a local loan shark who will offer you a lump sum of cash, provided you're willing to pay it back with interest once you've put his money to good use.

You can buy and sell the various goods that you've picked up along the way in the stores. If Capital City needs a truckload of beer, buy the booze in another city and take it on over. Canned fruit, iron ore and wood are just a few of



↑ The open road is all yours.



↑ At least there's no Radio 3.

Breaker! Breaker!

SURPRISINGLY, you can't play your own music while driving in *BMT*. Instead there are five different radio stations to tune into: Yeehaw! FM (country), K-ROK (metal), Space 108 (dance), MC Escher (rap) and Yak FM (jazz). We recommend all but Yeehaw! FM as the constant barrage of chicken pickin' frickin' music became just too much.



↑ Try and aim for the green arrows...

Meet the Jackson family

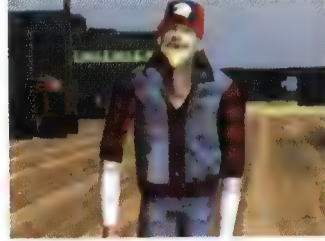
FOUR VERY DIFFERENT members of the Jackson family (no, not that one) make up the playable roster of characters in *Big Mutha Truckers*



↑ **RAWKUS JACKSON** As the brains of the bunch (not saying much), Rawkus thinks he's a ladies' man. He is, compared with his brothers...



↑ **BOBBIE SUE JACKSON** The only female of the clan, she thus spends much time fighting off the advances of her inbred brothers. Allegedly.



↑ **CLETUS JACKSON** He might look a little, erm, slow but don't let that put you off selecting him. It's the quiet ones you've got to watch, you know.



↑ **EARL JACKSON** The biggest hillbilly of the bunch and definitely Momma's little boy, this goofball just can't stop eating. One hell of a gut.



↑ Road signs will always lead the way. Forget all this GPS lark.



↑ You'll be able to pick up vital info in the various bars.



↑ Waste some time and quarters on the slot machines.

"BIKER GANGS WILL OPEN FIRE ON YOU IN AN ATTEMPT TO STEAL YOUR CARGO"

the other valuable commodities you can trade to make money.

At the garage, you can refuel, repair, upgrade and customise your rig, providing you have the funds to do so, of course. Ultimately, your goal is to rank higher than your siblings do in Momma's eyes.

Once you decide to leave the city, a hustler will approach you with a racing challenge. These usually come in the form of a good old-fashioned head-to-head race to a city of your choice. If you beat your opponent the winnings will be all yours. Lose, and you'll have to pay the victor out of your own pocket.

The handling of the truck is pretty simple and straightforward. You'll need to upgrade the brakes as soon as possible, though, as slamming on the brakes for a stop sign or when entering the city limits is about as useful as trying to stop a bull in a china shop.

As you travel on the open highways in search of your next small fortune you'll encounter biker gangs that open fire on you in an attempt to steal your cargo. The simple solution is to literally run over every one of the perps who dare to attack. This also causes your rig the least amount of damage.

Each truck also has its own unique first-person cockpit view that reflects the lifestyle and personality of its owner. CB radio receivers dangle from rear view mirrors and furry steering wheels are definitely the new black. The larger-than-life Earl Jackson, for example, likes his grease-soaked fast food a bit too much and his dashboard is littered with half-eaten burgers. Nice.

All told, *Big Mutha Truckers* is something a little bit different that we've enjoyed a fair bit at this preview stage. Review coming soon.



↑ All fuelled up and ready to go.



X-MEDIA



DVD

HOME THEATRE HEAVEN



LORD OF THE RINGS: SPECIAL EXTENDED EDITION

RRP \$74.95 (\$149.95 boxed) RATING M15+



AFTER FOUR UNBEARABLE months of waiting comes the new, improved, and hopefully ultimate edition of the first *Lord of the Rings* movie. Peter Jackson worked his team of indentured

CGI hobbits at Weta Digital around the clock to bring us this expanded version of the film, and it's truly a sight to behold. Freed from the restrictions of the cinema format, the new version sprawls over three and a half hours, and two discs.

The new scenes help flesh out the story, and fill in some juicy moments slashed from the theatrical cut. We get an intro from Bilbo's book on exactly what a hobbit is, Galadriel's parting gifts to the Fellowship, and more. Also note the new DTS soundtrack, reason enough to upgrade, should your home cinema not support the superior sound format.

Discs three and four hold over six

hours of extras, giving the viewer a good idea at just how much work went into model making, costume design, computer effects, and every other facet of the film-making process. This splendidly packaged 4-disc set retails for around \$75, but why settle for just the DVDs when, for merely double that amount, you can get two attractive bookends shaped like the giant statues of the ancient kings of Men?



THE SCORPION KING

RRP \$39.95 RATING MA15+



IT'S FITTING THAT The Rock's breakthrough film is a spin-off of a spin-off, given the fanciful nature of his day job at the WWE. Set around 3000 BC, *The Scorpion King* is a prequel to the *The Mummy Returns*, way back when the Scorpion King, or Mathayus as he was known,

was just a lowly assassin. While not an especially nice person, he was a man of honour, and in his quest to free his people he did not suffer fools, seductresses or waifs gladly. While not exactly strong on historical accuracy or artistic merit, this disc is big on extras, with interviews, featurettes and commentaries.

FUTURAMA: SEASON 1

RRP \$79.95 RATING M15+



Possibly the funniest TV show ever made. Philip J. Fry, cryogenically frozen pizza delivery boy, awakes in 31st century New New York. His misadventures with alcoholic robot Bender and the sexy one-eyed space captain, Leela, carry the series, a politically incorrect vision of

technology gone mad. Not only does Matt Groening's follow up to *The Simpsons* sport an insane joke density, and push the boundaries of computer-augmented animation to the limit, it also features an unprecedented number of clever sci-fi references. It's pure genius, and essential DVD viewing.





THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS

Saruman strikes back!

With the Fellowship wrought asunder, the disparate heroes of the first film do their best to fight back the forces of darkness. Pippin and Merry, kidnapped by the foul minions of Saruman, find themselves face to face with Treebeard, oldest of the walking tree creatures known as Ents. Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas, in their bid to rescue the Hobbits, end up fighting a pitched battle against 10,000 Orcs at Helm's Deep. And Frodo and Sam continue on to Mount Doom, with the vile Gollum tracking their every move.

Following the tepid, childish clone action of George Lucas' last offering, *LOTR* has really become the new *Star Wars*. Each new film leaves us on a knife-edge of anticipation until the next comes out, and each rewards us with new and



↑ No! You can't have the One Ring!

improved special effects and action. Cleverly written, brilliantly acted, expertly directed, hauntingly scored, and watched and loved by millions. It's the new high watermark in popular entertainment, and it's at a cinema near you. Try to save your money by not watching it more than once a week.



RAISED FIST
DEDICATION

VERY METAL. SWEDISH hardcore band Raised Fist practise an old-school, nigh on unintelligible brand of metal, bringing a rough, irrepressible sound to their third album. Throat cancer vocals and a persistently bleak message, with just a hint of punk. Playback is guaranteed to kill all Smurfs within a 100 metre radius.



LUCKY 7
LUCKY 7

STANDING OUT from the So-Cal Punk pack is no mean feat, but Lucky 7 make the grade by tempering their vocals with more rocking, guitar-centric riffs than your run-of-the-mill Blink 182 wannabe troupe. Their eponymous debut album emerges from their creative centres fully formed, and just a little sick.



NO FUN AT ALL
MASTER
CELEBRATIONS

A ONE-STOP-SHOP for the NFAA enthusiast, this 24 track album was compiled with the aide of an internet fan poll. Thus only the very, very best of the punky NFAA catalogue makes it onto this disc. Tracks include Suicide Machine, Out of Bounds, Stranded and of course, the provocative, disturbing Master Celebrator.



IN THE GREY
HOPELUSTY

THE CENTRAL COAST must be a depressing place to live, if the content of In the Grey is anything to go by. This debut EP holds a mere four songs, but each is of a quality and intensity such that even continued airplay on Triple J has done nothing to dampen its appeal. Morose guitars and vocals with an earnest, believable tinge of sorrow.



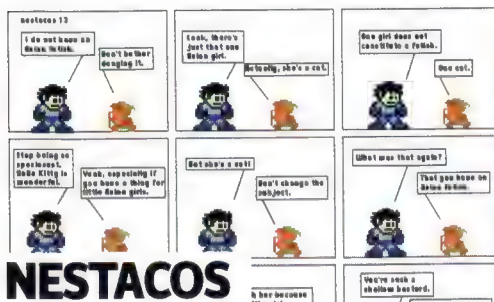
NINJA BURGER

www.ninjaburger.com

THE ONLY FAST-food franchise in the world that boasts that if you don't get your food in 30 minutes or less, they commit seppuku. Slinking out of the shadows into any corner of the world, you can salivate over the thought of getting a ruthlessly prepared Ninja Burger meal, a Samurai Chicken combo, or perhaps something from their stealthy Kids Menu. A full line



of merchandise, including t-shirts, aprons, and the official role playing game. Plus other diversions: desktop themes, fan arts, haiku, comics, the Ninja Burger employee manual, and more lethal frivolity besides. If only Red Rooster was this much fun.



NESTACOS

nestacos.fefe.org

"INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY VIOLATED with style, weekly." They're not kidding. Heavily pixelated characters from Nintendo's 8-bit era live out their sordid little lives, allowing the reader a voyeuristic window into their suffering. Witness in horror as Mario's numerous ex-girlfriends brazenly cavort with Luigi, and stifle a guffaw as Megaman ribs on the fat little plumber about his drug problem. "You've been eating 'magic' mushrooms again, haven't you?" Also starring Link, Seamus, Bart Simpson, Pururun, and other NES unfortunates. These depraved little cartoons are infinitely more entertaining than Nintendo's contemporary efforts.



SYN SONIQ

www.synsoniq.com

WHEN ONE'S INTEREST in video game music mutates into insatiable addiction, there's no better place to turn to than synSoniQ. Europe's leading video game music website retails soundtracks to games old and new, from Final Fantasy to Virtua Fighter, from Red Alert to Worms Armageddon. This site stocks all the latest and greatest releases from Japan, as well as a disturbing volume Amiga and Commodore 64 music. Browse by composer, or sample some of their remix albums. Most have MP3 snippets for download so you can try before you buy. If Martin Galway and Rob Hubbard rock your world, then check it out.



CHARTS

READERS MOST WANTED



LET US KNOW the Xbox games you're most looking forward to. Use the coupon on page 113, include a Top Five with anything you send us or drop us an email at staff@fxmi.com - always indicate your order of preference.



OUR SHOUT

As release dates become firmer and closer for the Christmas season, most of this month's Most Wanted, including *Splinter Cell*, *Colin McRae Rally 3*, *Blinx* and *Unreal Championship*, will be in your hands before long. On the other hand, *Halo 2* and *Project Ego* are still ages away from release but remain popular as ever. Go figure.

1. HALO 2
DEVELOPER: BUNGIE
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT RELEASE: 2003

2. PROJECT EGO
DEVELOPER: BIG BLUE BOX
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT RELEASE: 2003

3. SPLINTER CELL
DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT
RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2002

4. UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP
DEVELOPER: DIGITAL EXTREMES
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES
RELEASE: DECEMBER 2002

5. BLINX
DEVELOPER: ARTOON PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2002

6. COLIN MCRAE 3
DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS
RELEASE: OCTOBER 2002

7. SHENMUE 2
DEVELOPER: SEGA AM2 PUBLISHER: TBA
RELEASE: TBA

8. TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4
DEVELOPER: NEVERSOFT
PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION 02
RELEASE: NOVEMBER

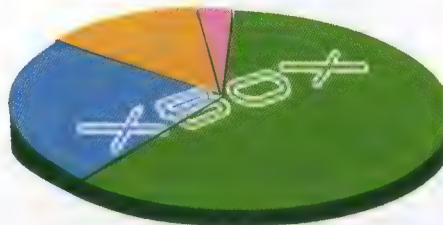
9. METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE
DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: KONAMI
RELEASE: 2003

10. PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2
DEVELOPER: BIZARRE CREATIONS
PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
RELEASE: 2003

THE HOT TOPIC

Shockingly relevant Xbox issue of the day

What *Halo* multiplayer levels do we play at lunch?

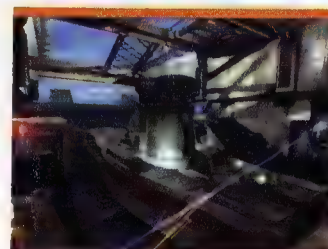


KEY (per cent)

Chill Out	65
Blood Gulch	15
Hang 'em High	17
Prisoner	3

THIS MONTH'S CHART THROB: BEN

1. UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP
2. STEEL BATTALION
3. HALO 2
4. SOUL CALIBUR 2
5. ONIMUSHA 2



BEN SAYS: *Halo 2* is just a pipe dream at the moment, such a long way off, but I'm hungry for some excellent first-person action, so it's up to the eagerly anticipated *Unreal Championship* (page 076) to fulfil my FPS dreams. I'll be saving up my pennies for a game thick with swordplay, but how do I choose between *Soul Calibur 2* and *Onimusha 2*? At least I've got plenty of time to decide. With *Unreal* to keep me happy for a while, next on my horizons is *Steel Battalion* - with the controller.

inform OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE CHART

WHEN YOU WALK away from a shop with a game in your hand, in a bag or tucked in your trousers (shame on you) an almost-invisible wire attached to the box is pulled taught. The other end is fixed to an umbrella - every time it opens, one more sale is notched up.



↑ AS THE THEATRICAL release of *The Two Towers* draws near, the success of Vivendi's video game adaptation of the books proves that the anticipation is growing in our minds. It is, after all, the greatest story of the 20th century, so who can blame anyone for wanting their little piece of Middle Earth?

1. THE LORD OF THE RINGS: FOTR

DEVELOPER: WXP PUBLISHER: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL
Middle Earth Mania takes hold as the next movie readies for release.

2. COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3

DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS
Rally racing's King of the Road makes an impressive debut at number 2.

3. TIMESPLITTERS 2

DEVELOPER: FREE RADICAL DESIGN PUBLISHER: EIDOS INTERACTIVE
Not surprising to see it here. It's one of our favourite games in the office.

4. FIFA 2003

DEVELOPER: ELECTRONIC ARTS PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
Living proof of how brand power can work for anyone.

5. AFL LIVE 2003

DEVELOPER: ACCLAIM PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM
Still popular, even after all these months.

6. NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2

DEVELOPER: EA SEATTLE PUBLISHER: EA
The next best thing to driving dangerously in *Burnout*.

7. HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN

DEVELOPER: IO INTERACTIVE PUBLISHER: EIDOS INTERACTIVE
Stealth-and-'ssassinate toughie steals a spot in the chart. Who dares argue?

8. BLINX THE TIME SWEEPER

DEVELOPER: ARTOON PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
Microsoft's time travelling cat falls a couple of places to come eighth.

9. HALO: COMBAT EVOLVED

DEVELOPER: BUNGIE PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT
Watch for this to go back up the charts when new owners discover its delights.

10. CONFLICT: DESERT STORM

DEVELOPER: PIVOTAL GAMES PUBLISHER: SCI
Excellent co-op play and now-topical Saddam bashing make this one to get.



↑ MULTIPLAYER deathmatches haven't been quite the same since the release of *Timesplitters 2*, which offers a much more frantically paced competitive match than *Halo* does. We'll find out next month if gamers prefer the cartoonish approach of this game, or the grittier, edgier approach of this month's *Unreal Championship*.



↑ EIGHT MONTHS ON and *Halo* is still going strong. Its current seventh place proves its excellence, but it not being near the top is a good sign that other good games are now giving the mighty FPS a run for its money. Either that or Jon is buying up all available copies. That must be why he never buys the beers.

XBOX GAME RELEASES

The forthcoming games you need to know about

All release dates are subject to change without notice.



DATE	GAME	GENRE	PUBLISHER	PLAYERS
NOVEMBER				
MID NOV	BALDUR'S GATE: D. ALLIANCE	ACTION RPG	INTERPLAY	1-2
2/11	COLIN MCRAE RALLY 3	RACING	INFOGRAMES	1-2
29/11	DYNASTY WARRIORS 3	ACTION	THQ	1-2
28/11	GHOST RECON	FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER	UBI SOFT	1-6
10/11	HARRY POTTER 2	ADVENTURE	ELECTRONIC ARTS	1
25/11	JAMES BOND: NIGHTFIRE	ACTION	ELECTRONIC ARTS	1-4
27/11	LMA MANAGER	SPORTS	CODEMASTERS	1-2
TBA	MAFIA	ACTION	TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE	1
29/11	MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2	2D FIGHTING	THQ	1-2
21/11	MECH ASSAULT	MECH ACTION	MICROSOFT	1-4
15/11	MICRO MACHINES	RACING	INFOGRAMES	1-4
29/11	MINORITY REPORT	ACTION	ACTIVISION	1
29/11	MORROWIND	ROLE-PLAYING GAME	UBI SOFT	1
TBA	NBA INSIDE DRIVE 2003	SPORTS	MICROSOFT	1-4
25/11	NBA LIVE 2003	SPORTS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	1-4
7/11	NHL HITZ 2003	SPORTS	ACCLAIM	1-4
29/11	OUTLAW GOLF	SPORTS	SIMON & SCHUSTER	1-4
29/11	PHANTOM CRASH	MECH ACTION	THQ	1-4
22/11	RALLY FUSION	RACING	ACTIVISION	1-4
15/11	REIGN OF FIRE	ACTION	THQ	1
27/11	ROBOTIC: BATTLEBORN	MECH ACTION	TDK MEDIA/THQ	1-4
22/11	ROCKY	SPORTS	ACTIVISION	1-2
15/11	SEGA GT 2002	RACING	INFOGRAMES	1
8/11	SHADOW OF MEMORIES	ADVENTURE	INFOGRAMES	1
8/11	SILENT HILL 2: INNER FEARS	HORROR/ADVENTURE	INFOGRAMES	1
22/11	STAR WARS JEDI KNIGHT II	ACTION/SHOOTER	ACTIVISION	1-2
22/11	SUPERMAN: MAN OF STEEL	ACTION	INFOGRAMES	1
7/11	LORD OF THE RINGS: FOTR	ADVENTURE	VIVENDI	1
18/11	TIGER WOODS PGA	SPORTS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	1-4
29/11	TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL	ACTION/ADVENTURE	UBI SOFT	1
22/11	TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4	ACTION SPORTS	ACTIVISION	1-8
14/11	TOTAL IMMERSION RACING	RACING	VIVENDI	1-2
15/11	TOXIC GRIND	SPORTS/ADVENTURE	THQ	1-2
8/11	TRANSWORLD SNOWBOARD	SPORTS	INFOGRAMES	1-4
15/11	TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER	ADVENTURE	ELECTRONIC ARTS	1
15/11	UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP	FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER	INFOGRAMES	1-4
6/11	WHACKED	ACTION	MICROSOFT	1-4
1/11	X-MEN: NEXT DIMENSION	ACTION	ACTIVISION	TBA
DECEMBER				
6/12	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER	SPORTS	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	1
19/12	LEGENDS OF WRESTLING 2	ACTION SPORTS	ACCLAIM	1-4
1/12	MERCEDES BENZ RACING	RACING	TDK INTERACTIVE	1-2
2/12	MOH: FRONTLINE	FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER	ELECTRONIC ARTS	1-4
6/12	MONOPOLY PARTY	PARTY GAMES	INFOGRAMES	1-4
LATE DEC	ROBOCOP	FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER	INTERPLAY	TBA
5/12	SERIOUS SAM	FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER	TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE	1-4
JANUARY '03				
9/1	ALL STAR BASEBALL 2004	SPORTS	ACCLAIM	TBA
10/1	BATTLE ENGINE AQUILA	ACTION	INFOGRAMES	TBA
28/1	DEAD TO RIGHTS	ACTION	ELECTRONIC ARTS	1
16/1	DRAGON'S LAIR 3D	ADVENTURE	UBI SOFT	1
24/1	FURIOUS KARTING	RACING	INFOGRAMES	TBA
9/1	PARIS-DAKAR RALLY	RACING	ACCLAIM	TBA
FEBRUARY				
LATE FEB	ATVZ QUAD POWER RACING	RACING	ACCLAIM	TBA
TBA	DOA XTREME BEACH VOLLEY	SPORTS	MICROSOFT	1-4
21/2	HOUSE OF THE DEAD 3	LIGHT GUN	SEGA	1-2
24/2	INDIANA JONES	ACTION/ADVENTURE	ELECTRONIC ARTS	1
24/2	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS	ADVENTURE	ELECTRONIC ARTS	TBA
5/2	PANZER DRAGON ORTA	SHOOTING	SEGA	1
14/2	RISK: THE NEXT GENERATION	STRATEGY	INFOGRAMES	TBA
27/2	SPEED KINGS	RACING	ACCLAIM	TBA
17/2	STAR WARS KOTOR	RPG	ELECTRONIC ARTS	1
TBA	V8 SUPERCAR RACEDRIVER	RACING	INFOGRAMES	1-2
TBA	YAGER	SHOOTING	THQ	1
MARCH				
31/3	BATMAN: DARK TOMORROW	ADVENTURE	ACCLAIM	TBA
TBA	CAPCOM VS SNK 2 EO	FIGHTING	CAPCOM	1-2
15/3	GLADIUS	FIGHTING	LUCASARTS	TBA
31/3	GROOVE RIDER	RACING	ACCLAIM	TBA
TBA	KENGO: LEGACY OF BLADE	ADVENTURE	UBI SOFT	TBA
TBA	KUNG FU CHAOS	FIGHTING	MICROSOFT	1-4
LATE MAR	MIDTOWN MADNESS 3	RACING	MICROSOFT	TBA
14/3	NBA STREET 2	SPORTS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	1-4

DATE	GAME	GENRE	PUBLISHER	PLAYERS
14/3	NICKELODEON PARTY	PARTY	INFOGRAMES	TBA
1/3	OP: FLASHPOINT ELITE	FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER	INFOGRAMES	TBA
3/3	RAYMAN 3	ADVENTURE/ACTION	UBI SOFT	TBA
15/3	STAR WARS: CLONE WARS	SHOOTER	ELECTRONIC ARTS	TBA
17/3	STAR WARS KOTOR	RPG	ELECTRONIC ARTS	TBA
TBA	SEABLADE	SHOOTER	SIMON & SCHUSTER	TBA
1/3	VEXX	ADVENTURE/ACTION	ACCLAIM	1
1/3	XIII	FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER	UBI SOFT	TBA
APRIL				
TBA	CRIMSON SKIES	SHOOTER	MICROSOFT	TBA
1/4	RAVENSHIELD	FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER	UBI SOFT	TBA
11/4	ZAPPER	SHOOTER	INFOGRAMES	TBA
TBA 2003				
	BATTLEFIELD 1942	FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER	ELECTRONIC ARTS	TBA
	GALLEON	ACTION/ADVENTURE	INTERPLAY	TBA
	OUTLAW VOLLEYBALL	SPORTS	RED ANT	TBA
	SHAUN MURRAY'S PRO WAKE	ACTION SPORTS	ACTIVISION	TBA
	BRUTE FORCE	FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER	MICROSOFT	1-4
	ALTER ECHO	ACTION/ADVENTURE	THQ	TBA
	DARK ANGEL	ACTION/ADVENTURE	VIVENDI	TBA
	RACING EVOLUZIONE	RACING	INFOGRAMES	TBA
	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE	ACTION/ADVENTURE	INFOGRAMES	TBA
	METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBS	ACTION/ADVENTURE	INFOGRAMES	1
	LOOSE CANNON	ACTION	UBI SOFT	04
	MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNT	ACTION	ELECTRONIC ARTS	TBA
	FALCONE	FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER	INTERPLAY	TBA
	STEEL BATTALION	MECH SIMULATION	THQ	1
	STAR WARS GALAXIES	ROLE-PLAYING GAME	ELECTRONIC ARTS	1
	WWE: CRUSH HOUR	ACTION RACING	THQ	TBA
	NINJA GARDEN	ACTION/ADVENTURE	MICROSOFT	TBA
	PSYCHONAUTS	ACTION	MICROSOFT	1
	EVIL DEAD: A FISTFUL	ADVENTURE	THQ	TBA
	PROJECT BG&E	ACTION/ADVENTURE	UBI SOFT	TBA
	WOLVERINE'S REVENGE	ACTION	ACTIVISION	1
	DUALITY	ACTION/ADVENTURE	PHANTAGRAM	TBA
	TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA	ACTION/ADVENTURE	ACTIVISION	1
	FABLE	ADVENTURE/SIMULATION	MICROSOFT	1
	BC	SIMULATION	MICROSOFT	1
	VIRTUA FIGHTER 4.1	FIGHTING	SEGA	TBA
	HALO 2	FIRST-PERSON SHOOTER	MICROSOFT	TBA
	STRIDENT THE SHADOW FRONT	ACTION/ADVENTURE	PHANTAGRAM	1
	ONIMUSHA 2	ADVENTURE	CAPCOM	1
	COPS	DRIVING	VIVENDI	TBA
	PHANTASY STAR ONLINE	RPG	SEGA	TBA
	SHENMUE 2	RPG	SEGA	TBA
	ULTIMATE BLADE OF DANNIS	ADVENTURE	CODEMASTERS	TBA
	SHAYDE	ADVENTURE	METRO 3D	TBA
	ARMADA 2	TBA	METRO 3D	TBA
	BALLERS	ACTION	MIDWAY	TBA
	LEGION	TBA	MIDWAY	TBA
	KINGDOM UNDER FIRE 2	STRATEGY	PHANTAGRAM	TBA
	RESTAURANT MANAGING SIM	STRATEGY	PHANTAGRAM	TBA
	AUSTIN POWERS	ADVENTURE	TAKE 2	TBA
	STATE OF EMERGENCY	ACTION	TAKE 2	TBA
	SHREK 2	ACTION	TDK INTERACTIVE	TBA
	CHARLIE'S ANGELS	ACTION	UBI SOFT	TBA
	FUTURAMA	ACTION/ADVENTURE	SCI	TBA
	MUZZLE FLASH	ACTION	MICROSOFT	TBA
	STARCRRAFT GHOST	ADVENTURE	BLIZZARD	1
	PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2	RACING	MICROSOFT	1-4
	TORK	ACTION	MICROSOFT	1
	NIGHTMARE CREATURES 3	ACTION	UBI SOFT	TBA
	UNREAL 2	FPS	INFOGRAMES	1
	ROLLING	SPORTS	RAGE	TBA
	KAKUTO CHOUJIN	FIGHTING	MICROSOFT	TBA
	THIEF 3	ADVENTURE	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	TBA
	RED FACTION 2	FPS	THQ	TBA
	TOEJAM & EARL 3	ADVENTURE	SEGA	TBA
	SOUL CALIBUR 2	FIGHTING	NAMCO	1-2
	FOUR HORSE OF APOCALYPSE	ADVENTURE	3DO	TBA
	AMPED 2	SPORTS	MICROSOFT	TBA
	SHINING LORE	ADVENTURE	PHANTAGRAM	TBA
	BLACK & WHITE NEXT GEN	SIM/ADVENTURE	ELECTRONIC ARTS	TBA
	DRIVER 3	DRIVING	INFOGRAMES	TBA
	LAMBORGHINI	RACING	RACE	TBA

HIT RECORD: THE SOUNDTRACK TO THIS MONTH'S NUMBER 7 GAME, HITMAN 2, IS AVAILABLE FROM SPECIALIST IMPORTERS. IT CONTAINS 65 MINUTES OF MUSIC FROM THE GAME, RECORDED BY THE BUDAPEST SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND CHOR.

LETTERS

WRITE TO US AT: Official Australian Xbox Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355
Email us at: staff@oxm.com.au. Your opinions count - we want to hear them!



LETTERS 10 EDITOR

NAME: KEVIN CHEUNG
GAME OF CHOICE: *OUTLAW GOLF*

Loads of mail came in about BMX XXX and the R rating rejection - you can read up about it on page 020. Surprisingly, there were many complaints about the Massive Entertainment Pack as well. What's to complain about? Read on...

CHEAPSKATES?

I recently took up an instore offer from one of your advertisers (Electronics Boutique) to trade in my old PlayStation (which was on the blink anyway), and 10 games (which had been gathering dust for 6 months), for a Massive Entertainment Pack bundle Xbox (for 200 bucks off the already impressive price).

This was the best gaming decision I have ever made. My main gripe is that while *Halo* came in its original case with manual, the other two games (*Sega GT 2002* and *JSRF*) were put on the one DVD with a combined manual that told me how to save and load the games in 5 languages. And that was it.

I will now have to search the web to find what the features of these two games are, like how to gain special prizes in *GT* or what the tricks and combos mean in *JSRF* (without accidentally seeing cheats or spoilers). The two games on one DVD is fine, but surely two complete manuals would not set MS back too much.

Finally before making the decision to

get the Xbox, I asked about the DVD playback quality as I do not own a DVD player. The salesman at another game store franchise told me that while the Xbox was superior to the PS2 it was primarily a game machine, and that playing DVDs constantly would damage the Xbox. Is there any truth to this? Should I fork out another \$300 for a DVD player?

Great mag by the way (as a 38yr old gamer who started with a Commodore 64, I have seen them all come and go).

*Rainman
via email*

We're not going to try to defend Microsoft on this one - the combined manual thing was very ordinary, as was the lack of any DVD case for the disc, for that matter. Still, a good deal's a good deal. As for the Xbox as a DVD player, we'd characterise the Xbox as a good solution player for those without standalone DVD players. Playing DVD movies on the Xbox won't wear away the lens - every disc that goes in the tray is a DVD. There might be some problems with PlayStation 2s, though, since it always switches between CD and DVD formats. That could cause problems...



PLAYING DIRTY

So Xbox Live is finally coming. Eventually, anyway. Personally, I can't wait to play games like *Star Wars Galaxies*, *Halo 2* and *Unreal Championship* over my broadband connection. The only thing that could spoil this beautiful dream is the prospect of hackers and cheaters ruining things. When *Phantasy Star Online* came out for Dreamcast, things were looking rosy for online gaming. However, it wasn't long before cheaters were hacking the system. They corrupted other people's saved games and boosted their own stats. What is Microsoft going to do to stay one step ahead of the cheats and keep Xbox Live safe for us rule-abiding gamers?

*Fergus Thomas
via email*

Security has always been a key factor in Microsoft's success in the PC sector. It has got a wealth of experience in keeping gaming safe with the Microsoft Gaming Network and MMORPG titles like *Asheron's Call*. Your personal details and game saves will be out of the reach of slippery hackers. Microsoft has a secure server in Redmond. When the world ends in 50 million years, the



↑ **Bruce Lee.** We did warn you...

server will be the only thing left standing - it is that secure.



A CRITIC SPEAKS

I have just bought *Bruce Lee* for Xbox and I'm really disappointed. It is the most horrible game I've ever played. I mean, how was this game even released? Now that I've played it, I wouldn't even want it for free. If Xbox is releasing any more games like this, Xbox fans might as well invest in a Mega Drive.

Please Xbox - be more realistic and give us some really good games.

*E. Kastrati
via email*

Well, we did tell you that it wasn't much chop in Issue 08 (did words like 'this is 24-karat crap' and 'has no place on Xbox' in the *Bruce Lee* review not give you a hint that the game was a shocker? Oh well...). Really good games, eh? See page 96 for a good guide.



YOURS OPTIMISTICALLY

As a proud owner of the leading console, I was lost for words when I found that the Xbox has again dropped in price for the second time in six months.

I bought my dream machine and all its wonderful extras at the full price. Is Microsoft taking the mickey? I received my loyalty refund pack (thanks!) but feel that original, loyal owners should get something else extra.

Is it fair to ask if Microsoft will give out rewards for a second time after the latest price reduction?

*Tony Fearnley
via email*

STAR LETTER



I'M RIGHT, YOU'RE NOT

Just how far can the limits of Xbox and Xbox Live be pushed? I am a huge fan of action, adventure and strategy games; and I am finding that all the so called 'new' and 'inventive' games being released these days, regardless of the format, are lacking in any such innovation. It seems too me that programmers and designers are taking old games, adding a dash of colour, mixing in some modern music, cleaning up the games lines, then pawing it off as original. Are there no new cutting edge imaginative designers out there?

Here is an example of what I'd like to see on the shelves of the stores. We all know that Live is going to be the place where multiplayer destruction can be imposed on fans from around the world.

How about a series of games that is a combination of traditional console design and online gaming where characters of varying fighting styles, weaponry and hidden abilities can be evolved and trained at home, and then uploaded on to the Live servers where you can unleash your destruction on willing opponents? Is there any chance that some thing along those lines will be available too us?

*Shane Monds
via email*

Games like that are a lot closer than you think. In *Mech Assault*, you can customise your robots and take it to Xbox Live the instant it's up and running. There's plenty more in the works, too, with *Massively Multiplayer Online RPGs* and episodic adventures on the way.



↑ The writer of each month's Star Letter will receive one of these specially made STM back packs, perfect for transporting your Xbox to a friend's house. Everything fits neatly inside, and we even use it ourselves!



↑ Moto GP will shine on Xbox Live.

Your chances of getting another refund are slim to none. After all, Sony didn't offer anything for their recent PS2 price-cut and I didn't get anything when tins of my beloved Cup-a-soups went two-for-one at my local shop.



NO R RATING

I'm sure you guys know by now that the game *BMX XXX* has been banned in Australia and the recent proposal to introduce an R rating to games has been rejected. What is OAXM's take on this?

Jody2k2
via email

We're quite disappointed by the decision not to introduce an R rating to the classification scheme for video games. Such a decision reflects the short-sightedness of politicians and law-makers who find it convenient to turn video games into a scapegoat for social problems. On the upside, it doesn't mean we're going to see any massive change in the kinds of games being released. However, it means is that as the ageing market demographic demands more mature games, game distributors will be less able to meet that demand.



INVERTED HANDS

I would be very grateful if you could ask all games publishers to release demos for your magazine with fully customisable controls options.

I am left-handed and have found your demos such as *Halo*, *Battle Engine Aquila* and *Enclave* quite frustrating. To make things worse, *Enclave* is also inverted - how annoying!

Could you also mention in your reviews any control problems for us cack-handed types.

Martin Langford
via email

Us left-handed people have rights too! I'm also left-handed but it's never really affected me when it comes to games. My handwriting is immaculate (I'm told) but that's irrelevant. We're definitely up for offering alternate control set-ups on our Game Disc. We'll be suggesting it to all developers when they consult us.



RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

Please help me! My mum has always disliked me playing

Shorts



TIME OUT

In between writing the magazine and playing games what does the team get up to?

Joe Steele
via email

Joe spends much of the day performing musical bump routines, while Phil claps his eyes on the latest issue of *National Geographic*. We're a bunch of tasteful, cultured chaps.



WE WANT BOOSTER DISCS

When are you going to get around to releasing the *DOA3* booster disc that a friend of a friend's uncle told me was released with Issue 01 of *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*?

Mal Dodgson
via email

For the last time - there is no *DOA3* booster disc. Entirely available extra and costume was included in the Australian release of the game. The booster disc was only available overseas. The next person to write or call in with this question will get some savage verbal abuse from us.



RARE DEAL

I have just heard about the buyout of Rare by Microsoft, including the shares owned by Nintendo. So can we expect to see Xbox sales soar now that Rare is exclusive to Xbox?

Iain Soper
via email

The Rare purchase is a good thing for Xbox gamers. *Perfect Dark 2* and *Kameo* are just two of the games coming from this star developer.



HALO JUMPS

I watched your Ultimate Warthog Jumps movie on Game Disc 08 but couldn't do it myself. What's the secret?

Tom McLean
via email

Play co-operative in Campaign mode. Get your partner to grab loads of grenades, then make him stand in front of the Warthog. Melee attack him from behind so his grenades spill under the vehicle. Repeat lots of

video games. I need your help to find some way to change her mind. Right from the beginning she tried to get rid of my consoles but I love them too much and I always will.

I have tried everything. I have already used the 'strategy games are good because they improve the mind and I learn from them' approach. I've also used 'but I like killing people', but

times. Set off the grenades underneath the jeep with a rocket.



MISTAKEN IDENTITY

I was both shocked and appalled to discover recently that a few upcoming Sega titles for the Xbox will not include 60Hz support. What's going on here?? 60Hz support is one of the many reasons why I play my Xbox more than my PS2, and with Sega being one of my very favourite game developers, the lack of 60Hz support in upcoming titles greatly disappoints me. Who would want to play these games knowing that they're slower than their NTSC counterparts? Knowing that we're being offered sub-standard products sickens me.

OJ Thomas
via email

Ahh, the irony. And to think that Sega once insisted every developer should include a 60Hz mode on their Dreamcast games. Count that as a black mark against Sega.



DVD LIES

I have a small problem with your game movies. Why are they such a low picture quality?

Martin E Parker
via email

A slight reduction in picture quality is mostly due to the fact that all our videos need to be compressed to fit on the disc alongside those playable films. We always strive to source the best quality footage but will do better in future.



NURSE THE STRAPS

I am loving Xbox now for eight months and it talks to me when I sleep and the dark man says "don't play no more" but I have to because the Master Chief will die in the snow otherwise. When the daytime is finished I play my game collection until it starts over again and then I work for money but no fun. If games go into the broadband I may have to learn other ways to get money and that may be good or bad. I don't know.

Sandy
via email

We have passed this email on to the relevant authorities. Good luck.

that was obviously frowned upon.

I'm not the only one who loves video games and has a relatively crazy mum, right? I can't be the only one who buys new video games instead of new clothes, right? Can I?

Riaz Amlani
via email

You have to keep telling your mum that

games are 'educational' and will turn you into a well-rounded, socially responsible human being. She'll definitely believe you, especially if you start doing the washing up.



DOING THAT THING

I write this with only a few days until *The Thing* comes out on the Xbox. I really have to say that the interview with John Carpenter on Game Disc 08 was damn wonderful. Listening to him talk about the game and the filming of the movie was just too cool.

But I just wish that I could've seen the whole trailer for the movie - only bits of it came on during the interview. Is there a chance that on the next issue or one in the near future there could be a showing of the full trailer and some extra movie footage on a game disc?

I haven't actually seen the movie but I'm definitely going to rent it out as well as get the game. Are there going to be any compos where you could win a copy of the game or the movie on DVD?

Please let me know soon because I'm just dying to know!

Jeffrey Anane
via email



↑ The Thing. Damned fine.

If you haven't already seen the movie, you're in for a terrifying treat. Does anyone else wonder why John Carpenter looks so much like Lo-Pan out of *Big Trouble in Little China*, or is it just me? In the absence of the film's trailer (we're all about the games, you see), check Game Disc 09 for an excellent terror-filled trailer for the game itself. Just keep the lights on...



STAMP OUT ALL CRAP GAMES. NOW

I have an idea about how to stamp out crap games for good. We elect a governing body of games reviewers from different magazines. Each developer has to submit their game to this governing body and everybody reviews the games separately.

A meeting is then set and each score is taken into account and the game is then given an overall score which must be printed on the game cover. This will prevent people from picking up a game with great packaging and finding out later that it's a turkey.

Mark Firth
via email

It's a good idea. Too bad no distributor would ever agree to it.



EXCLUSIVE ACCESS

Where we go behind the scenes of the
biggest games currently in development





XIII

See a secret agent comic book come to life before your very eyes!

WORDS: STEVEN BAILEY

DEVELOPER: UBI SOFT MONTREAL

PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT

RELEASE DATE: APRIL 2003

PLAYERS: 1-4, 2-4 ON XBOX LIVE

WEBSITE: WWW.UBI.COM

A CEL-SHADED first-person shooter? Whatever will they think of next? *Sim Bollywood*? *Halo 2* in Smell-o-Vision? *Home & Away* vs *Capcom*? Even the most cynical critic of the cartoony graphical style seen in the likes of *Jet Set Radio Future*, *Taz Wanted* and *Robotech: Battlecry* would have to

admit that *XIII*, Ubi Soft's cel-shaded first-person shooter has striking visuals and is just plain funky.

We were lucky enough to get the opportunity to play three levels of *XIII* to death. What follows are some juicy details on what could be the hippest, freshest game of its kind.

As the XIII of the title, you're part of a secret government faction, number 13 of 16. The story features characters taken straight from the Belgian comic series of the same name by Jean Van Hamme, where you play agent XIII. It begins with poor old Thirt washed up on a remote beach, with no idea of who he is and how he got there.

The comic book connection goes far deeper than just cast and plot, because *XIII* absolutely nails the look of a graphic novel thanks to its amazing Technicolor cartoon graphics. The three missions we played

In his other pocket (the one not full of massive guns), XIII keeps a bunch of gadgets handy, including a lock pick and a grappling hook. The first is easy to use - just equip it whenever you see the key icon - but the grappling hook takes a bit of getting used to. Pushing forwards/back causes you to swing across certain gaps, and the hook itself can be reeled in and out to lower you down a shaft, or pull you up to a higher vantage point.

WHIRLY GIG

Get your bazooka primed, obviously, but don't shoot until you're guaranteed a sure fire hit on this whirlybird. Otherwise, you'll be up *that creek*.

HEALTH RISKS

This displays the status of your head, torso and legs as you take damage. Any body armour in your possession is also shown on this manly gauge.

SHOOTS YOU, SIR

Your weapon of choice. Be warned: some of them have a wicked kickback that can throw your aim wildly off target.

RIFLE THROUGH

Tap the X button to switch between guns, and whip out the required sidearm. Anything less than the bazooka in this situation is a bit optimistic.

LISTS

CROSSBOW

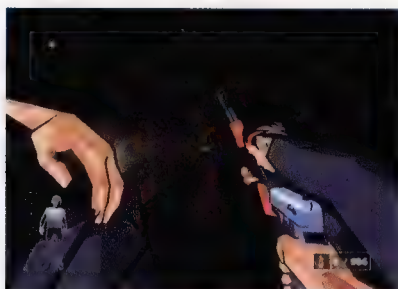
BERETTA

M15

M60

BAZOOKA

1/6



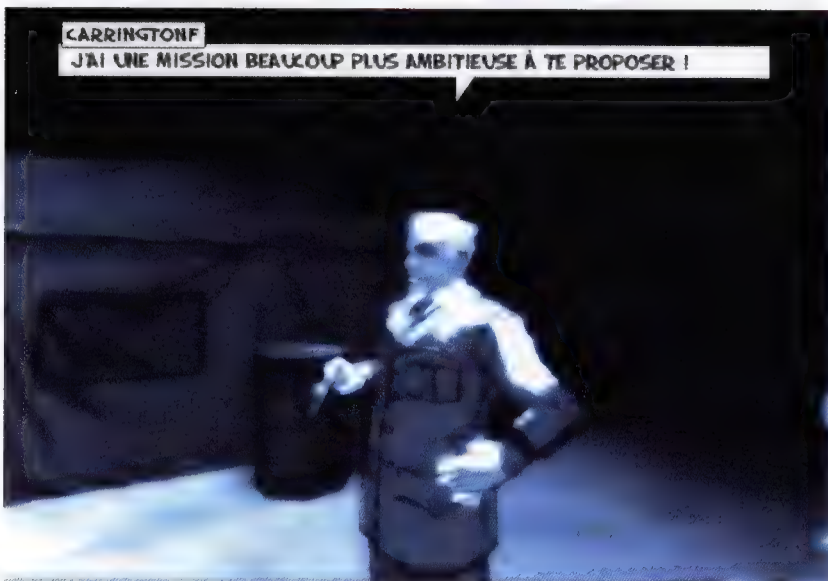
↑ Dump the guard's body out of sight.



↑ A bit too close for comfort, that one...



↑ Lower yourself slowly, or risk a nasty shock to the system.



↑ Flashback mode - but fear not, the French will eventually be translated into English.



↑ He's coming right for us!

EXCLUSIVE SCREENSHOTS


↑ "Was it something I said? Or my gaudy fashion coordination? Oh, the 'shooting you' thing. Of course."



↑ Using a hostage as a shield won't protect you completely, but it will give any assailants a smaller target to hit.

ROBOTS

GUN CULTURE

At present, at least 17 weapons are available in XIII. They vary from long-range (Sniper Rifle, Crossbow) and close-quarters arms (Hunting Rifle) to typical (Uzi, Beretta) to unorthodox fare (Harpoon Gun).

"LOOK AT THE GORGEOUS LOCATIONS - IF YOU'RE NOT BUSY SHOOTING A CHOPPER"

» were really beautiful, not just because of the well-realised shading of the characters. The locations are also particularly stunning, like something out of a video game travel brochure.

One level sees XIII (aka Jason Mullway, aka Jason McLane, aka Steve Rowland aka a few more pseudonyms) fleeing across a cliff top after leaping from a burning castle. The escape route leads to plenty of sniping and a splendid view of the ocean as it swells and crashes. Be sure to zoom in and goggle at the waves, and how they catch the setting sun so brilliantly.

Another task involves creeping around a series of warehouses at a harbour, taking out multiple patrol guards with minimum fuss. When you've beaten your way to the dock itself, you'll be treated to yet another grand view of a docked ocean liner, surrounded by cranes and basking in the lovely red hues of a blazing sundown. It's truly gorgeous stuff, and worth a long look - when you're not too busy shooting a helicopter, that is (see Bogie On My VI on page 044).

There's plenty of detail in the cel-shaded graphics, despite their clean,



A COW SAYS MOO»»

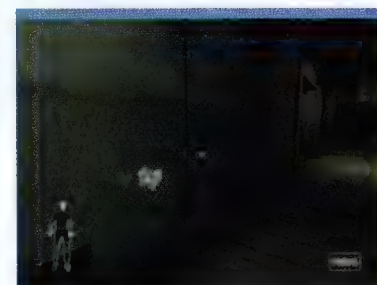
TA-DAH!!! You can learn to speak comic book in five easy steps. It's so simple.



»» Cop someone with a round of bullets and BAM! - they're knocked off their feet.



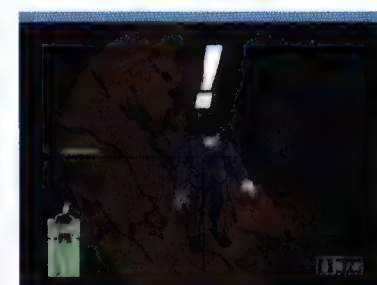
»» NOOO!, a death cry, is accompanied most often by wailing and throat clutching.



»» Via your sixth sense, TAP indicates guard movement on the other side of walls.



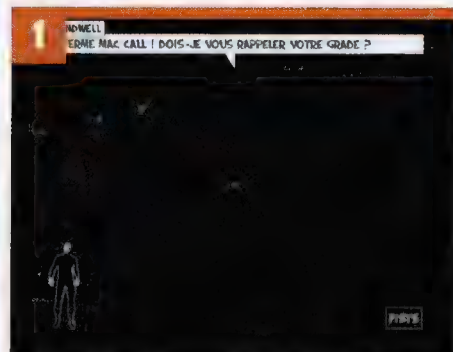
»» The sound of a massive explosion, BAOOMM! will always shake the room.



»» More a noisy gesture than a word, ! is the result of a guard sensing your presence.

IT'S A STUPID: TEAM OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN BOX MAGAZINE RECENTLY TOOK PART IN A QUIZ, AND WERE STUMPED BY THE FOLLOWING QUESTION: WHAT IS THE ROMAN NUMERAL FOR '500'? NEEDLESS TO SAY, WE GOT IT WRONG, BUT NOT FOR WANT OF TRYING. MAX: "IT'S V". BEN: "IT'S J". STEVE O: "Y R WE SO BAD AT QUIZZES?"

GO GET 'EM, AGENT >>> A search-and-rescue at an enemy installation



1 You start out in a system of ventilation shafts, smashing your way through grilles and eavesdropping on a conversation between high-ranking officials.



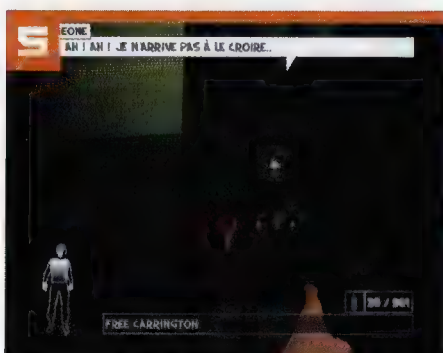
2 Find your way to the elevator, whether by stealth, gunplay or with a hostage as a human shield. Picking up the shotgun from the toilets is a good move.



3 The Guards' quarters are locked, and surrounded by bulletproof glass. Make good use of the grappling hook to get in, avoiding nasty death by electrocution.



4 Once inside, take out both of the fellas on patrol with minimum fuss. Sniff around, and you should find a swipe card that lets you through important doors.



5 Deeper into the installation, you'll find Carrington in this here prison cell. Use your lock pick to free him and then he'll accompany you to the exit.



6 Cazza points you in the right direction - towards the Cable Car station - and the mission success contained therein. Only another 36 missions to go...

>>> distinct colours. Your equipped weapon reflects all light sources, highlighted in a beautiful double-shading effect. Blood smears in convincing ways, too. Off someone with a sniper bullet and it'll leave a spatter of crimson on the wall behind the fallen corpse, or send a bad guy flying with a bazooka round to leave a gruesome trail of the red stuff in his morbid flight path.

But there's more to *XIII* than shooting guns in sexy surroundings. Stealth is an important part of the gameplay, and it works in a similar way to both *Splinter Cell* (Issue 08, 9.7) and *Metal Gear Solid 2*.

You quickly learn that it's best to take down guards with a minimum of fuss, then stash their bodies where they won't be found. Noisy kills bring lots of unwanted attention, and it'll only take a few bullets to turn you into stuffing for a bodybag. You may be blessed with a sixth sense (see below), but as *XIII* you're still mortal.

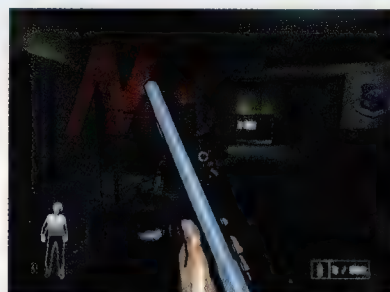
If you're feeling ballsy, or your back is against the wall, it might be worth taking a human shield by grabbing someone from behind. Be warned though, that while it makes you harder to hit, it'll slow you right down, prevent reloading and only allow the use of one-handed weapons (Pistol, Uzi, Magnum).

If guns aren't your thing, then throwing knives is a sneaky alternative. Or, if you want to render someone unconscious, grab a bottle or a chair and bring it crashing down on his head as he looks the other way.

We've only seen one application of *XIII*'s sixth sense talents, and that's his ability to 'see' guards through walls. Whenever a guard is patrolling in an adjacent room, a series of taps indicates his movements (see A Cow Says Moo on page 045), allowing you track his position. At first it's confusing - "Aiiieee! Rat people in the crawl space!" - but it's a cool take on the usual radar device used in other games. >>>



↑ Too late. Get him on his next patrol pass.



↑ He's just heard that Santa Claus isn't real.



↑ Yep, a chair in the face will do that to a man.

>>> BULLIT TIME

Those of you who've seen the Game Movie of *XIII* on Game Disc 07 will have been privy to the cool, sassy presentation of the game, both in the intro sequence and funky, jazz tunes that bring to mind films like *Bullitt* and *Out of Sight*. Re-invented retro is the way forward, baby!

>>> BIG MEMORIES

Flashbacks kick in at certain points of some missions, whisking *XIII* away from his current location into a stark and spooky monochrome dream world where everything is slightly out of focus and tinged with a gorgeous shade of blue. These are mini-levels that you can actually play, and are pivotal to the leading man discovering his past and hopefully sorting out the nasty bouts of amnesia.



↑ Cel-shaded means 'made to look like a cel'. A cel is one frame of animation, 'cel' coming from celluloid, upon which animated movies were once painted.

»» IDONJIS INFO

»» SMASH IT UP
Items can be smashed to reveal ammo and extra weapons. An icon like a broken Shreddie hovers over destroyable objects. Similarly, a hand symbol appears when you get near an unlocked door or an unconscious guard who can be searched.

"IT'S MORE THAN JUST SHOOTING IN SEXY SURROUNDINGS. STEALTH IS IMPORTANT, LIKE IN SPLINTER CELL AND MGS 2"

»» There's no info on his other ESP skills as yet, but at least it's a promising start. Our only significant gripe with *XIII* at this juncture is the lack of response from guards when they're shot.

That might be a little harsh to point out, with at least five months until the game is released. But our 'gripe' is more of a suggestion to change something that we really hope is improved in the final version of the game.

It's an important little detail, especially

when you think of the excellent enemy responses to your ammunition and weaponry in games like *Halo* and *TimeSplitters 2*. In those games, every time you plug enemies, they respond accordingly, clutching the wound and stammering backwards ever so slightly.

It makes a huge difference to a game's authenticity and the satisfaction you get from the action. Without it, *XIII* currently feels more flat and 2D than is probably intended. Other than that, not much else is poor right now.

So, it's a question of whether or not the finished game will have the personality to back up the looks. We really hope so, mostly because there's potential here for a great game experience, but also because *XIII* is set for release during February of next year, the post-Xmas drought period when games are thin on the ground.

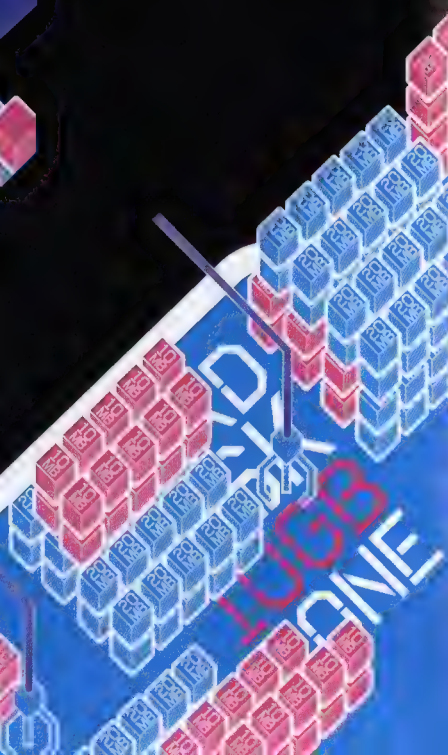
Keep your fingers crossed, don't walk under any ladders and don't beat up any mirrors. Hopefully, *XIII* won't be an unlucky number.



↑ Barbed knives come in handy when silent, deadly kills are needed.



↑ Flick the switch to drop a Portakabin on some unsuspecting guards.



THANKS FOR THE MEMORY

WORDS: MATT WOLFS

ILLUSTRATIONS: IDENTIKAL www.identikal.com



HARD DISK DRIVES (called so because of the fact that the disks were made of a rigid aluminium alloy) sure have grown in size since IBM Engineer Reynold B. Johnson invented the first in 1957. Made up of fifty 24-inch disks, with a whopping storage capacity of five megabytes, the IBM RAMAC 350 tipped the scales at a modest one tonne, costing US\$35,000 per year to lease. Big money for a big HDD at the time, but fast-forward to 2002 and it's an entirely different story.

Hard drive technology has slowly evolved over the past 45 years, with access times (access times being made up of seek time, settle time and latency) sped up, read/write heads sitting closer and closer to the platter (these days the read/write head sits roughly .007mm above the platter, so close that even a particle of dust can cause the read/write head to "crash", scraping the magnetic surface off the platter itself), not to mention massive storage increases and massive size decreases. These days a whopping great big 120GB HDD can be purchased for your PC for under \$400, and it's not a whole lot bigger than your hand.

However the console scene has been plodding along for the last twenty plus years without anything even resembling a hard drive - until now.

As well as raising the standards for console graphics and sound, the Xbox is the first console to ship with an

in-built hard drive, and boy didn't Microsoft want everyone to know about it. Depending on where your Xbox was manufactured, it will have inside either a Seagate ST310211A U Series 5 (20GB in size, but only one side of the platter is being used, and of that available 10GB, 8GB is formatted for use, has a seek time of 8.9milliseconds) or a Western Digital Protégé WD80EB drive (8GB in size, 12.1ms seek time). Despite all the hype and hoopla surrounding the first console ever to ship with an in-built hard drive, it's still one of the best hardware ideas in quite some time.

The main advantage Hard Disk Drives hold over Random Access Memory is that it is 'non-volatile', meaning that the memory retains its contents even after the power is turned off. This is the reason why the Xbox HDD also doubles as a gigantic memory card. This factor alone drives down the costs of having to regularly buy memory cards as you purchase more games.

The advantage that non-volatile memory holds over RAM is also extended to in-game situations. Where RAM can be a severely limiting factor in games, which can be plainly seen in the vast range of first-person-shooters available across many platforms. A general rule of thumb was that large levels would need to be broken up into sub-levels in order to fit into RAM. As has been shown with *Halo*, this rule of thumb is a thing of the past, provided the game is developed on Xbox to take advantage of the >>>





"WE DON'T HAVE TO FIND HACKY WAYS TO WORK AROUND THINGS"

» HDD in this way. For those who've played *Halo* (all of us, hopefully), this seamless sub-level loading is something that really should become something of a default standard with Xbox adventure/action titles. Vice President of Xbox content, Ed Fries, spoke a little about in-game advantages of the HDD at E3.

"Almost every made-for-Xbox game exploits the hard disk, but people don't talk about it because it's boring.

"*Halo* is a great example, you couldn't do *Halo* without the hard disk, because the game is constantly paging textures off it. The texture detail is very fine.

When you go right up to a tree and look at the bark for example, that use of the hard disk, treating it like an extension of memory, is probably the biggest thing. Games like *Rallisport Challenge* stream the world off the hard disk as you drive down the track. You can do stuff like loading the geometry and the textures of a game world."

One title on the horizon that's being billed by Lionhead's Peter Molyneux as "the best role-playing game ever" is *Fable* (formerly known as *Project Ego*). Being developed by Lionhead satellite Big Blue Box, Molyneux has dropped quite a few golden nuggets

of information about just how grand in scale *Fable* is going to be, and a lot of it can be directly traced back to the presence of a HDD. Big Blue Box's Dean Carter says: "When you design a game, you usually think in terms of 'how much can I squeeze into this memory?' With *Fable*, we're entirely free of this artificial constraint.

"We don't have to find hacky ways of working around things such as 'what happens when I leave the environment?' Most console games enforce a reset once you've left.

"This works admirably for simplistic games, but we're trying for something a little different. *Fable* is all about 'what effect have I had?' Well, we can record every effect you can think of, down to the tiniest footprint if we so desire, all using the hard disk.

"The hard disk makes for excellent storage, where we can load stuff into memory very quickly



HOW THE HARD DISK DRIVE AFFECTS PLATFORMERS



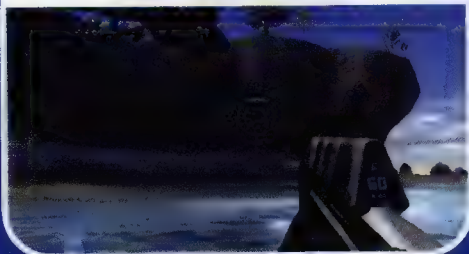
BLINX IS THE big one here with time manipulation, but the idea of a platform game that doesn't require any loading screens in-game is an appealing one. This means that platform games in general could even be as big as *Morrowind* if they really wanted to be!

HOW THE HARD DISK DRIVE AFFECTS RACING GAMES



AS YOU'RE HAMMERING down the straight at Talladega you see the smoke ahead, covering the track. As you pass through the smoke, you can see cars which have sustained damage trying to get to the inner ring. As the cars clear off the track, the signs of a massive pile-up remain until the race is over.

HOW THE HARD DISK DRIVE AFFECTS ACTION GAMES



LOADING LARGE SUB-LEVELS within the world to create a more immersive and seamless experience. *Halo* and *Morrowind* are two shining examples of games that have redefined the way we think of their respective genres.

HOW THE HARD DISK DRIVE AFFECTS SPORTS GAMES



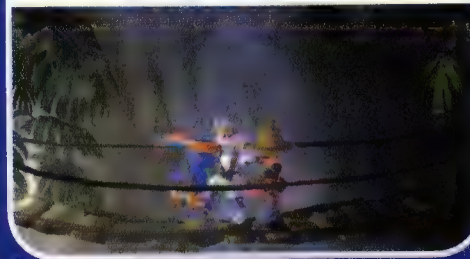
AS THE SEASON in your favourite football comp unfolds, being able to download the latest rosters and statistics is a god-send, potentially saving hours and hours of data alteration. Heaven knows what EA is going to do about its yearly releases.

HOW THE HARD DISK DRIVE AFFECTS ROLE-PLAYING GAMES



HAVING A lasting effect on the environment is something that can only add to the immersion of a quality RPG title. If you beat the tar out of a local, it doesn't feel right for them to be your best mate the next day. The information about that beating must be stored within memory.

HOW THE HARD DISK DRIVE AFFECTS PARTY GAMES



COULD THE high and lofty aspirations of game design apply even to the simplest of party games? Why yes! All it requires is a little imagination. Take *Kung Fu Chaos*, for instance, which uses the hard drive to record entire four-player fights, and then replays the highlights in fully choreographed form at the finish.



when it is needed. This 'stuff' could be anything from textures and sounds to whole levels and creatures. This means that we effectively have access to four times the amount of texture memory, sound memory and so on.

"It is our intention to pretty much banish loading times while playing the game, so the whole thing should be one seamless experience. There is no differentiation between internal and external environment. You can look out through a window and see the whole world interacting in the distance."

Another game which will use the Xbox HDD in a completely new and unique way is *Blinx* (9.2, Issue 08). Developed by Artoon and billed as the first ever '4D' game (the fourth dimension being time), *Blinx* uses the Xbox hard drive in a very innovative way. As you play, your actions are being recorded to the HDD. *Blinx* is required to obtain certain crystals in order to use the fourth dimension.

Once these crystals are acquired, *Blinx* can record himself doing whatever he chooses; be it firing his weapon at various baddies, or even altering parts of the landscape as he sees fit, he can then play back the recording and interact with his ghost self. This is especially effective when *Blinx* backs himself up when taking on the forces of evil. *Blinx* is definitely a title to check out, with the use of the HDD being far more than some lame gimmick.

However, *Blinx* is not a game that was built around the HDD from the get-go, as producer Katsunori Yamaji explains,

"The development of this game did not start with the object of creating a game that utilises the hard disk. The objective was to create a totally new platform game. And one condition that *Blinx* had to meet was that it had to be something only possible on Xbox."

Games like *Fable* and *Blinx* only scratch the surface of the massive potential for Xbox titles which are being designed to utilise the HDD for more than just level caching. The idea of being able to download the latest rosters for your favourite sports title or new levels and characters for your favourite RPG, or new vehicles and tracks for the latest racing game is very appealing. When Xbox Live comes into place, there's even talk of the release of episodic games, which creates real-world continuity.

Despite the fact that hard drive technology has been available for many moons now, it is but a newborn in the console arena. Like in-game 5.1 Dolby Digital surround sound, it's another part of the Xbox hardware which is helping to raise the standard for console hardware, and go a long way towards having a positive effect on your gaming experience.



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WE REVIEW games on a 32 inch PHILIPS Matchline III digital TV. As well as a brilliant widescreen picture, this beauty boasts Dolby Digital surround sound and has wireless FM rear speakers. Apart from giving us all TV-insecurity when we think of our humble sets back home, it means we've got the best environment in which to play and test every Xbox game to the limit. For more info check out www.philips.com.au.

WHAT OUR BADGES MEAN

At the start of a review, along with the Game Information box telling you who's made the game, when it's out, how many people can play, and the official website address, you may see a badge or two. This is what they stand for:



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Every issue we give the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine* team's favourite release the Game of The Month award.



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SCORE KEY

8.5-10.0

THE XBOX ELITE - ONE OF THE VERY BEST AVAILABLE

7.5-8.4

A TOP QUALITY RELEASE THAT'S WELL WORTH HAVING

6.5-7.4

STILL WORTH CONSIDERING, BUT HAS SOME FLAWS

5.1-6.4

AN AVERAGE TITLE WITH NOTHING OUTSTANDING TO OFFER

2.5-5.0

A BAD GAME, AND ONE YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T BOTHER WITH

0.0-2.5

CALLING SUCH A RANCID STINKER A 'GAME' IS LIBELLOUS

THE TRUTH

WE ONLY REVIEW the finished Australian version of a game - the version that you will be paying for and playing. The US or Japanese release will often differ from its Australian counterpart. By sticking to this policy, we will never mislead you by reviewing imported games or preview versions.

Microsoft has no access to, or influence over, the *Official Australian Xbox Magazine*. The company supplies us with screenshots, info and games before any other magazine. We don't do deals with Microsoft, or any other publisher, to get access to finished games. As a result, we're in the best position to give you what you deserve - balanced, objective and accurate reviews on which to base your buying decisions.

THE VERDICT

POWER

How technically adept is the game? Does it make proper use of the Xbox? How impressive is it?

STYLE

How stylish is the game? How well is each aspect of it designed? How good does it look and feel?

IMMERSION

How involving is the game? Will hours fly by in minutes? Are the controls instinctive or awkward?

LIFESPAN

How much is there to the game? How long will you keep coming back to it? Is it worth the money?

GOOD POINTS

WE'LL SUM UP SOME OF THE GAME'S BEST AND MOST EXCITING POINTS FOR YOU HERE...

BAD POINTS

...AND LET YOU KNOW WHAT'S PARTICULARLY BAD ABOUT IT HERE.

SUMMARY

This is our overall opinion of the game, condensing the review into one easy-to-digest comment.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

10 // 10

THE TEAM



KEVIN CHEUNG // EDITOR



JAMES COTTEE // WRITER

REJOICE! *Unreal Championship* has finally made it in the office, and Kevin can finally get off that new top-end PC he's always singing about.

NOW PLAYING: *Unreal Championship, Outlaw Golf, Splinter Cell*
TOP GAME CHARACTER: Ulala (*Space Channel 5*)

BELIEVE IT or not, but James has figured out a way to get Sam Fisher fired from *Splinter Cell* before even starting on a mission! We'll get him to tell us how soon enough.

NOW PLAYING: *Mech Assault, Splinter Cell*
TOP GAME CHARACTER: Vibri (*Vib Ribbon*)



MATT WOLF // TECH EDITOR



CAMERON RAPPMUND // WRITER

MATT COULDN'T hide his disappointment in *Unreal Championship*'s sickness-inducing choppy frame rate. All's well, though, he's getting a genuine Bills jersey for Xmas.

NOW PLAYING: *Rocky, Madden NFL 2003*
TOP GAME CHARACTER: Geese Howard

CAMERON must be tired of listening to us preach about the virtues of a joystick, but he's also had time to lurk forums and lay the smack down on all who dare.

NOW PLAYING: *Marvel Vs Capcom 2*
TOP GAME CHARACTER: Ryo Hazuki (*Shenmue*)



RALPH PANEBIANCO // WRITER



STEVEN BAILEY // STAFF WRITER

RALPH has amazed us all this month with his schedule-juggling abilities, between writing, final exams, and still being able to keep up with his games!

NOW PLAYING: *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4, Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer*
TOP GAME CHARACTER: Tony Hawk

THIS ISSUE IS Dr Bailey's last. He is moving to pastures new, where he will eat the grass and make milk. Thanks for everything, old bean.

NOW PLAYING: *CMR 3, Tony Hawk's 4, Phantom Crash*
TOP GAME CHARACTER: The GTA3 leading man



JON ATTAWAY // STAFF WRITER



GAVIN OGDEN // NEWS EDITOR

JON HAS SPENT so much time playing rally games this month that he can't help but shout "hard right" as he walks down the stairs.

NOW PLAYING: *Blinx, Splinter Cell, CMR 3*
TOP GAME CHARACTER: Thing on a Spring (CBM64)

POOR OLD G-MAN has been struggling with his wisdom teeth. Between them, they are learning Russian and hauling a piano into a fourth-floor flat. Boom boom!

NOW PLAYING: *Rocky, Unreal Champ, Blinx*
TOP GAME CHARACTER: One of the Seacats

THE PICK OF THE GAMES



RALLY FUSION

This new rally franchise throws in some arcade thrills.

062



MICRO MACHINES

Miniature multiplayer mayhem for four players.

066



TENNIS MASTERS

Well, not really the masters of anything...

068



UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP

The biggest, baddest first-person shooter the Xbox has ever seen? Find out if it really is that good...

056



FIFA 2003

Watch the soccer fans go googly over this one.

070



LMA MANAGER

Soccer management where you can see the action

072



007: NIGHTFIRE

James Bond is back in an all-new adventure.

084



HARRY POTTER 2

New book, new film, and a new game for the boy wizard.

075

»MORE REVIEWS

- 068 TENNIS MASTERS SERIES 2003
- 073 MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2
- 074 TERMINATOR: DAWN OF FATE
- 076 LEGENDS OF WRESTLING 2
- 078 REIGN OF FIRE
- 079 TOXIC GRIND
- 080 TRANSWORLD SNOWBOARDING
- 082 OUTLAW GOLF
- 086 SHADOW OF MEMORIES
- 087 SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL

»NEXT MONTH: In Issue 11, on sale January 22, we're hoping to bring you more big reviews including *Serious Sam*, *Total Immersion Racing*, *NBA Inside Drive 2003*, *Medal of Honor: Frontline*, *Dead to Rights*, *Whacked*, and more. But it might change. People say something will happen, we put it in the schedule, and then it all goes wrong two days before deadline...

It takes a little more to make a



The next level of multiplayer deathmatch has arrived

UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP

WORDS: GAVIN OGDEN

UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP has been one of the most highly anticipated Xbox games since it was announced in 2000, for three very good reasons. One: it's the latest game to emerge from the well-established and hugely popular *Unreal* universe.

Two: it has been created from the ground up specifically for Xbox and the Xbox Controller - this is no conversion of a PC game made to fit on a joypad. And three: it's the flagship multiplayer shooter for Microsoft's high-speed online gaming service Xbox Live, which with any luck, will be released in Australia within the next six to eight months.

It's this third reason where this exclusive review of the game runs into a small technical problem. Xbox Live doesn't launch until mid to late 2003, and even though the option to play online is there on the opening menu, no-one is playing *Unreal Championship* on Xbox Live and we didn't get the chance to test it using the Test Drive service. (Basing our review on the early Beta testing phase of Xbox Live would not give the correct impression of game or service.)

What you're about to read is how the offline game fares. But don't worry, it still gives you a valuable insight into the game's features: its weapons, controls, maps and various game modes. We'll review the Xbox Live component of the game as soon as we can. Until then, offline is all you need. >>

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: DIGITAL EXTREMES

PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES

RELEASE DATE: DECEMBER 6

PLAYERS: 1-4; 2-16 VIA XBOX LIVE

WEBSITE: WWW.UNREALCHAMPIONSHIP.COM

>> THE BRIEF

TEAM-BASED FPS compatible with Xbox Live offering a variety of fast-paced and frantic deathmatches.



↑ Take out the Blue team before any of its members reach point A and score a point.

» Digital Extremes worked on *Unreal Championship* for well over two years under the careful eye of Epic Games, the company which created *Unreal* and *Unreal Tournament* for PC. As with *Tournament*, *Championship* is a dedicated multiplayer game, but one that a single player can enjoy immensely. There's no story to follow or cut-scenes to show you what's lurking around the next corner; this is a game of accuracy, timing and speed.

The opening menu presents several different options: Single Player, Play Live, Instant Action, Tutorial, Profiles and Settings. You can jump straight into a game under the Instant Action option; just pick a game style and map and off you go. Think of this like a quick race

"THERE'S NO STORY OR CUT-SCENES. THIS IS A GAME OF ACCURACY, TIMING AND SPEED"

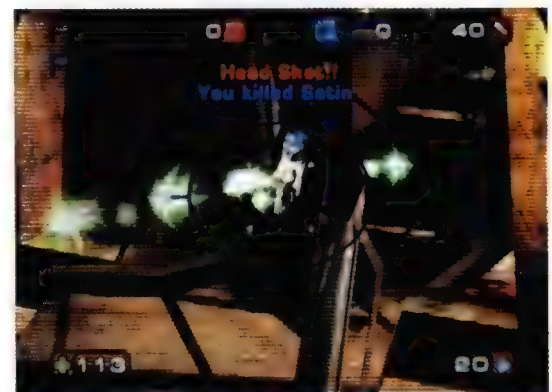
option in a driving game, only without the accelerating and braking.

If you're new to the whole thing of playing a dedicated multiplayer shooter or wanting to know more (people do take this kind of game really seriously) then hit the Tutorial option to learn the basics.

Skip it and you'll be left wondering how your opponent dodged the rocket that you thought couldn't miss... »



↑ In terms of delivering pure action, *Unreal Tournament* is unrivalled.



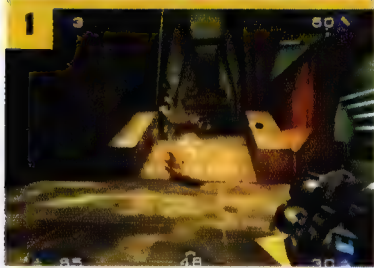
↑ There's nothing like a bit of camping to stop an assault.



↑ Double Domination: think *Deathrow*, but with guns.

WEAPON OF CHOICE >>>

EACH WEAPON has a primary and secondary use, with the Shock Rifle you can produce a third attack by combining its dual functions. These five weapons we found ourselves using the most.



>>> **ROCKET LAUNCHER:** Hardcore weapon that can fire up to three rockets.



>>> **FLAK CANNON:** Fires both flak that bounces off walls as well as grenades.



>>> **TRANSLATOR:** Firing this weapon allows you to teleport around the map.



>>> **SHIELD GUN:** Shock your opponents to death or create a shield around your body.



>>> **LIGHTNING GUN:** A sniper rifle that fires a devastating bolt of electrical energy.



↑ The volcano spews out molten lava balls in your direction if you stand still for too long.

"A FEMALE ANNOUNCER PROVIDES COMMENTARY DURING DEATH GAMES"

>>> Guiding you through your introduction to the brutal bloodsport is a computerised female announcer, who also provides commentary during each game of death.

A new and very important feature of *Championship* is the Adrenaline system (see Adrenaline Rush on page 059), which gives you the option of using one of four abilities when your character's Adrenaline level reaches maximum. These abilities can come in very useful during the various types of games.

Before you start shooting though, you'll have to set up your profile. Pick a name, a team of five characters from the extensive list given, choose your team colour from red or blue, then select your difficulty level from one of four levels: Novice, Skilled, Masterful and Godlike.

Novice is definitely for beginners as the bots (CPU-controlled cannon fodder) aren't too aggressive or accurate, but playing the game on Godlike difficulty setting is as hard as nails, if not harder. It almost feels as if the bots are

programmed not to miss, regardless of their position on the map.

The single-player game is broken down into an order of five different types of game (all of which are playable online): Team Deathmatch, Capture the Flag, Double Domination, Bombing Run and Survival, with the slightly odd number of seven rounds in each mode.

After you've won the first two rounds of a specific mode of play, the next one will be unlocked. When you've completed and won all seven rounds, you'll be awarded with a gold statue for your trouble.

For anyone who's played a multiplayer shooter before, the Team Deathmatch mode shouldn't present any surprises, as this is the simplest type of game to play. Two teams of five characters battle it out until one of them hits the kill limit, which varies from 10-20 depending on your position on the ladder.

Capture the Flag is another favourite of the multiplayer shooter fan and

>>> BONUS INFO

>>> NO SELECTOR

Annoyingly, you can't choose to replay any round once you've completed them all and won the cup. It would have been good to be able to go back and play your favourite games over and over again until you know the map inside out.

>>> DOUBLE JUMP

Using the double jump feature is a must, as it helps you leap up to certain power-ups and gives you an advantage when shooting at an enemy due to your elevated position. It will also become a valuable asset when dodging incoming fire. As you bounce around, your enemies will find it harder to hit you.

>>> BACKING TRACK

Each level comes with its own soundtrack, ranging from thumping industrial rock tunes to tripped-out ambient loops. The more industrial the setting the harder the backing track. Big outdoor levels will feature a calming feel to them. But there's no option to use your own music from your hard disk. Bummer.



↑ You play out this map in the middle of a sandstorm and it looks amazing.

ADRENALINE RUSH >>> Using the natural excitement of playing to improve your game

AS YOUR SCORE increases (through kills), so does your Adrenaline count. Once it hits 100, you're given the choice of four abilities via a simple button combination: agility, berserk, regeneration and invisibility. Knowing and being able to perform these abilities are vital to the outcome of the match.



1 AGILITY: Increases your speed. Vital when you have to travel a fair distance to stop opponents from scoring in Capture the Flag and Double Domination.



2 BERSERK: Boosts your rate of fire. Handy when you're faced with a full team of opponents storming your base or defending a specific area of a map.



3 REGENERATION: Restores both health and shield levels to a one-off maximum of 200 points. Best used when you're attempting to return a flag to base.



4 INVISIBILITY: Stealth mode allowing you to move around the map virtually unnoticed. Priceless when attempting to capture a flag from an enemy base.

>>> BONUS INFO

>>> BLACK AND WHITE
You use the Black and White buttons on the Controller to assess the current game you're playing. The Black button brings up the score for both teams while the White button presents you with your character's statistics.

>>> *Championship's* stab at it works perfectly. Each team has a base with a flag in it, and the object of the game is to infiltrate the base, pick up the flag and return it to where your own flag is in your base to score.

Your flag needs to be on its spot in order for you to score and the first to five wins. Unlike in *Halo*, you can actually shoot while carrying the flag, which makes a lot of difference because in Bungie's game the standard bearer is cannon fodder for his opponents.

Double Domination is a frantically paced game that sees teams attempting to secure two separate points on a map for ten seconds to score a point - first to five emerges victorious. Points A and B are on different sides of the map and players have to run over the icons to turn them the same colour as their team. Holding the icons while the female commentator counts down from ten, and the opposition is firing its way towards you, is a rush - especially if you take them out before they make it to the icon.

Bombing Run is more of a sport with guns than any of the other modes as it >>>



↑ The Chain Gun will tear your opponents apart... literally.



↑ By combining the Shock Rifle's primary and secondary attacks you can unleash a third. Very pleasing to watch when you get the timing right.

» features a bomb as a ball. Players must be in possession of the bomb when they pass through the opponent's goal to score. Both teams begin in their bases and the bomb spawns in the middle of the map.

Players holding the bomb can pass it to their team-mates but cannot shoot, meaning that support is crucial as you advance towards the opponent's base.

Only when the above four modes of play have been completed does Survival mode become available. This is basically team deathmatch without the team. It's a one-on-one fight to prove yourself as the ultimate champion.

The variety and style of maps in all modes is nothing short of amazing. Each has been designed to suit the particular type of game that it hosts.

Some of the deathmatch arenas feature tight maze-like corridors with several flights of stairs, ramps and lifts while Double Domination maps often feature huge indoor and outdoor areas perfect for team assaults.

Each map has also been created with an astonishing eye for detail. You'll sometimes just want to stop and admire the surroundings.

Maps range from huge ancient temples with tunnels, streams and corridors running underground to complex industrial structures with several lifts arriving at multiple vantage points perfect for sniping. In the vast outdoor jungle arenas, fireflies hover around the action.

Every map will impress you in its own right as each has its own unique feel and characteristics. Some you'll get the hang of



↑ Three rockets in the back should sort this chap out. Just watch where the ball goes.

straight away while with others it'll take some time to figure out the best routes.

Playing the game with bots isn't the same as playing with human players, but the AI of UC's bots will gladly help you pass the time until Xbox Live is launched.

We did occasionally come across the odd team-mate bot stuck on the scenery or others

who just stand around as if they're waiting for Christmas. A quick rocket up the backside soon sorts that out though.

Your team of four bots will carry out the simple commands you issue to them. Pressing the Y button brings up a list of four commands: freelance, defend, attack and taunt. Once you've used them a few times it becomes

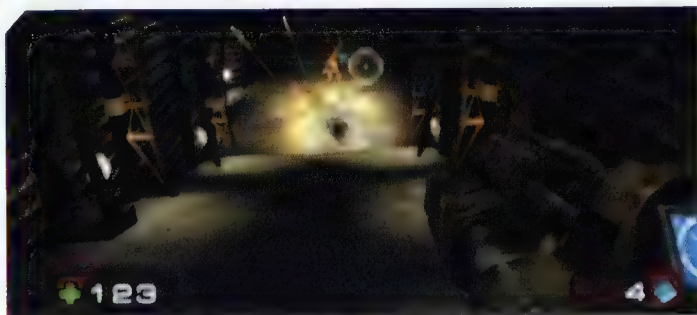
» BONUS INFO

» LET'S ROCK

The majority of arena names sound like early '90s metal bands. Get a load of Asbestos, Insidious, Compressed, Grim Smote and Lost-Faith. As each map loads up you can read a little background on how it came to be used as an arena.

» THUMBS HANDY

Click in the Left thumbstick to jump and the Right thumbstick to centre your view. Zooming in with the Lightning gun is done by holding down the Left trigger.



↑ The Flak Cannon is one of the most powerful weapons in the game.



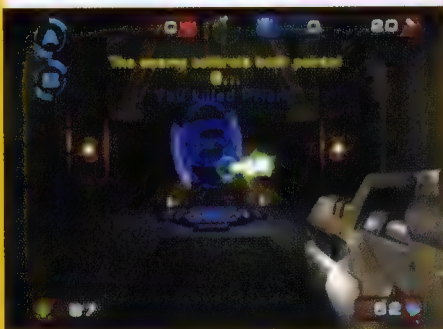
↑ Four-player split-screen multiplayer is a taster for play via Xbox Live.

GAME OF DEATH >>> Your deathmatch options explained

THERE ARE some great game types you might not have played before, but will thoroughly enjoy once you've tried them out a few times and learnt the rules.



Storm your enemy's base during Capture the Flag, make a grab for the pole and run for your life.



Take over and hold separate points on the map for 10 seconds in Double Domination. Unleash hell!



Grab the ball and blast your way towards the enemy's goal to score in Bombing Run.

"AS A SINGLE PLAYER GAME, AGAINST BOTS, UNREAL CHAMPIONSHIP IS BARELY AS SMOOTH AS HALO."

>>> second nature to quickly issue commands during a frantic firefight.

Our biggest fear was that the game would be so fast and frantic that it would be impossible to improve skills. While the game does run at an incredible pace, it's still possible to aim for the all-important headshots.

Practice does make perfect, as they say, and there's a deep level of accuracy and timing to get to grips with.

Digital Extremes has managed to make the controls as simple as possible while at the same time making them feel solid. Using the

Chain Gun is great fun, as the whole screen shakes while the pad rumbles with a vengeance. The overall selection of weapons is also good. But you'll quickly find your own favourites and stick to them. Each one does have its own use though (see Weapon of Choice on page 058).

Unreal Championship played as an offline game with bots is great. But the prospect of playing in teams on Xbox Live with the Xbox Communicator is mouth-watering. All signs point to it being nothing short of stunning.



↑ Facial features and the animation of team-mates is excellent.

XBOX THE VERDICT

POWER

Everything is fast, and looks beautiful and detailed. Xbox is really earning its spurs here.

STYLE

The unique look of the *Unreal* universe has never been realised as well as it is here.

IMMERSION

The frantic action will have you playing for hours at a time. Lots of arenas to commit to memory.

LIFESPAN

Once Xbox Live comes along you won't want to put it down. Potentially limitless fun to be had.

GOOD POINTS

- ♦ FAST YET EASILY CONTROLLABLE.
- ♦ HUGE VARIETY OF MAPS TO EXPLORE.
- ♦ AMAZING TO LOOK AT.
- ♦ GREAT VARIETY OF WEAPONS.

BAD POINTS

- LONG LOADING TIMES.
- NO SYSTEM LINK.

SUMMARY

A great first-person shooter, severely hampered by frame rate problems. Xbox Live might liven up the package, though.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

9.2/10

PREVIOUSLY: Incoming News Story - Issue 07, page 022

COMING SOON: Tips - Issue 12

RAW HIDE: THE HIPPOPOTAMUS HAS SKIN AROUND AN INCH-AND-A-HALF THICK. IT'S SO TOUGH THAT MOST BULLETS CANNOT GO THROUGH IT.





↑ A fast and furious, arcade-based rally game that lets you smash the cars to bits.

The antidote to driving sims, but no lesser game for it

RALLY FUSION: RACE OF CHAMPIONS

WORDS: STEVE O'ROURKE

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: CLIMAX BRIGHTON

PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 22

PLAYERS: 1-4

WEBSITE: WWW.ACTIVISION.COM

THE BRIEF

ARCADE-BASED rally game where you beat the clock and other drivers. From the maker of the excellent *Moto GP*.

WHO WOULD EVER think that racing games could be compared to buses? But just like the double-deckers, you wait ages for one to arrive and then three turn up at once. In the same month that both *Sega GT 2002* (Issue 09, 7.6) and *Colin McRae Rally 3* (Issue 09, 8.0) roared into the office and did handbrake turns all over our desks, *Rally Fusion: Race of Champions* nips in just before we wave the checkered flag.

So, another straight laced rally sim that'll put the brakes on anyone who hasn't got an encyclopaedic knowledge of engine oil? Nope. This is an arcade rally racer that's both great to look at, easy to pick up and fun to play.

Rally Fusion is loosely based on the slightly obscure Michelin sponsored Race of Champions event, held annually in the Canary Islands. But that doesn't mean that all tracks are lined with palm trees, bars named after footballers and pink men in pastel shirts eating kebabs.

Instead, you have a multitude of both courses and challenges along with a plethora of options to keep you plugging away at the game.

On an eye candy level, *Rally Fusion* is up there with the best of them. Attention to detail has been lavished on pretty much everything you see during the race. The tracks are varied, ranging from desert to arctic, with city and forest levels in between.

The cars themselves look the business and respond to the environment admirably. Light reflects from bodywork when the sun shines on it, and dirt splashes on the car if you race through muddy patches.

But reflections and mud splatters are the superficial ways in which the cars interact with the tracks. By far the most impressive aspect is just how much damage you can do to your vehicle. You can trash your motor, and indeed those of competitors, on a level almost with the *Destruction Derby* series of old.

Discarded bumpers and smashed windscreens are the tip of the iceberg. Listen to your co-driver scream in terror as you rip the doors off, wrench off the bonnet, smash big chunks of bodywork and turn a perfectly good tyre into a ball of rubber ribbons before grinding along on three wheels.

In reaction to the damage, the car responds suitably to the pain you inflict upon it. Waste a wheel and get ready to struggle to regain control, damage the gearbox and watch your rate of acceleration drop like a stone. These aspects encourage you to not turn the race into a bout of bumper cars, no matter how tempting that option may be.



↑ Not really a rally car but then not really a rally track. This is an arcade-based qualifying level.

“YOUR CO-DRIVER SCREAMS IN TERROR AS YOU TURN A TYRE INTO RUBBER RIBBONS”

But, unfortunately, the dodgem effect is one the game's inevitable drawbacks. In creating an arcade rally title, realism and indeed many elements of simulation are sacrificed. Cars can bounce off one another like snooker balls. You can also find yourself driving horizontally along fences and walls and the old chestnut of using an opponent to help you brake around corners (by slamming into him) is in effect here.

Even in the traditional time based rally mode, handling can also be questionable and often feels very light to control. Although you are faced with many variations of track and weather conditions, the driving sensation of navigating different terrain often feels quite similar and results in just a case of braking hard,

throwing out the back end and hoofing it forward as quick as you can.

There is also a lack of depth that, regardless of its arcade intentions, does not disguise an area that could have been improved. The Race of Champions Challenge mode is probably the most extensive of the options available as it requires qualification through a series of stages and then progression through a multitude of challenges in order to unlock different classes of cars.

During each specific challenge, damage is carried over to the next stage, yet you are only presented with an extremely basic repair option where credits can be spent on fixing vital components with no

SEASONED RACER



↑ High-res textures are the prime feature of the snowy winter wonderland.



↑ The heat wave effects in the desert stages are a nice touch.



↑ The Inca stages offer muddy madness and a healthy dose of rain on the camera.

BONUS INFO

BACKSEAT DRIVERS

If you're not concentrating in the race, your co-driver will quite happily shout insults at you. Examples include "You'll wreck the BLEEP-ing car" (an actual bleep) and name calling like "idiot" and "moron". Unfortunately the ability to stop the car and knock lumps out of your colleague is not included.

ARCADE ANTICS

The messages that appear in your field of vision announcing your driving feats annoy. Our long jumps were followed by a crash due to the words obstructing our view of the road.

THE CAR'S THE STAR

Nineteen cars are available in three engine classes. All the usual manufactures are represented including Peugeot, Audi, Mitsubishi and Ford.

MUSIC MAESTRO

Unfortunately, the music is the same old staple guitar-based rock nonsense that has been present in games of this type since the vinyl record was invented.

RALLY RELAY

A nice addition is the ability to race in a relay mode where you automatically change to a different car every lap.



↑ This driver decides to take the quick way down the mountain...

US AUTOS: THE FIRST EVER RACE OF CHAMPIONS TOOK PLACE IN 1998 NEAR PARIS. DESPITE TORRENTIAL RAIN, OVER 15,000 SPECTATORS CAME TO WATCH THE MUDDY ACTION. THERE'S CLEARLY NOT MUCH TO DO IN FRANCE OF A WEEKEND.

CRASH TEST DUMMY >>> I said hard left!!



↑ Rally cars aren't meant to be three wheelers.



↑ Rock and roll, rally style.



↑ Expect over-the-top dynamics.



↑ Fast and furious action at the back of the pack. Work to be done here...



↑ More cars than you can shake an exhaust at.



↑ The perils of arcade racing are all too obvious.

>>> scope for any kind of procurement or customisation of parts.

But criticisms aside, *Rally Fusion: Race of Champions* is a great racing game for people that may not necessarily think of themselves as hardcore racing fans. All the requisite components of a quality racer are present - break-neck speed, tight racing and spectacular crashes. And it's only because the game is so satisfying on an arcade level that many may

look for more depth of gameplay to continue enjoying the experience.

In the same vein that *Championship Manager* fans consider the more accessible *LMA Manager 2003* to be beneath them, rally purists may not give much thought to this title. That's a shame because, in terms of pure racing fun, *Rally Fusion: Race of Champions* is a contender that doesn't deserve to be overshadowed by more established driving titles.



THE VERDICT

POWER

Great looking races and the framerate nips along nicely too. Plenty of detail in every screen.

STYLE

Damage-heavy and lots of nice weather effects. The handling is a little light though.

IMMERSION

Getting out of Class C is a big ask. After that prepare for a challenge - if arcade racing is your thing.

LIFESPAN

Loads of racing options to play through before you even think about challenging a mate.

GOOD POINTS

- SOLID, PLAYABLE ARCADE RACE FUN.
- LOOKS VERY GOOD.
- EASY TO PLAY.

BAD POINTS

- TOO ARCADEY FOR THOSE THAT LIKE SIM DRIVING GAMES.
- HANDLING IS BASIC.
- FEEBLE GARAGE MODE.

SUMMARY

Not really a 'proper' rally sim but instead this is a quality arcade racer that looks great and is a ton of fun to play.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

8.0/10

>>> PREVIOUSLY: Playable Demo - Game Disc 09

>>> COMING SOON: Tips - Issue 11



CLUBBERS GUIDE TO

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↑ The established Micro Machines formula hasn't been messed with very much.

Manic motor mayhem made minuscule

MICRO MACHINES

THE BRIEF

VERY SMALL cars racing around very outrageous tracks in a racing franchise game famous for multiplayer fun.

WORDS: JAMES COTTEE

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: INFOGRAMES SHEFFIELD

PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

PLAYERS: 1-4

WEBSITE: WWW.INFOGRAMES.COM

The *Micro Machines* games were a stroke of genius. They took a fairly lame toy franchise and transformed them into one of the best party games ever to grace a home console. On the original PlayStation, they were the single best reason to lash out on two multi-taps, as they supported insane 8-way racing action. The Xbox version updates this solid concept for the 128-bit era.

A scrolling, top-down racer, *Micro Machines* lets four players race around large, fanciful environments. The track variety stems largely from the dimensions involved, as while all the racers are an inch or so long, the tracks are made

to real-world scale. They run along the lines an imaginative child may use to race their toys - up a ramp, across the table, a death defying jump, followed by more ramps, jumps, and hairpin turns. These tracks are augmented with different surfaces, moving hazards, teleporters, death-defying drops, and other quirky things you won't get in any conventional high-brow racing game.

Since the camera follows the action around winding, convoluted circuits, there's a handy feature in place to ensure all the cars remain on screen simultaneously. When one player's car lags the length of the screen behind the leader of the pack, then their vehicle is unceremoniously destroyed. It then re-appears with the others, but the player is a point behind. This method of scoring not only removes the need for ugly, eye-strain inducing split-screen play, but ensures that each race is an utterly cutthroat battle for survival from go to whoa.

This new version sports multiple vehicular modes, including cars, speedboats and motorcycles. They behave differently, but all share the need for deft handling. Thankfully, all the tracks are designed with bright colours and clearly marked boundaries, removing any excuse for failure short of utter incompetence. *Micro Machines* provides

BONUS INFO

TOOLS O' THE TRADE
Standard power-ups like turbo and invincibility sit next to obscure weapons like oversize frying pans, magnets and liquid nitrogen that turns your target into an ice cube.


DEAD GREMLINS
This was one of the last games from Sheffield House, formerly known as Gremlin Graphics, before being shut down by Infogrames.

BONUS INFO

MONOPOLY
The Hasbro toy empire is a global mega-corporation with many tentacles. They own Wizards of the Coast, who in turn own Dungeons and Dragons. They also own all the Monopolies: AFL Monopoly, Star Wars Monopoly, and so on. So you could say they have a Monopoly monopoly.

TRACK LINE-UP >>>

A little look at little courses

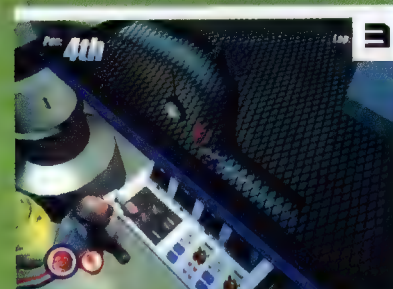
 OFTEN, IT'S what happens off the track that captures your attention as much as what goes on it. Check these out:



↑ Quite literally, there's a rat in me kitchen. What should one do in this situation?



↑ The rubber duckie saves his modesty and the game from a higher ELSPA rating.



↑ Armed with a frying pan while racing around a lab's ceiling. As you do...



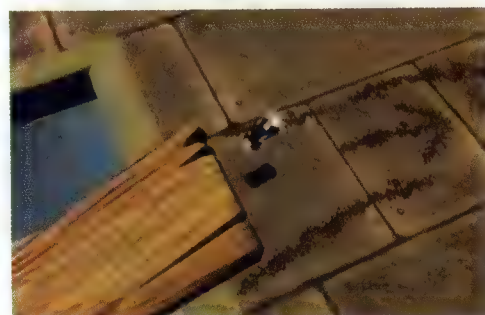
↑ Aunt Bessy about to give that no-good chicken a sweet uppercut.



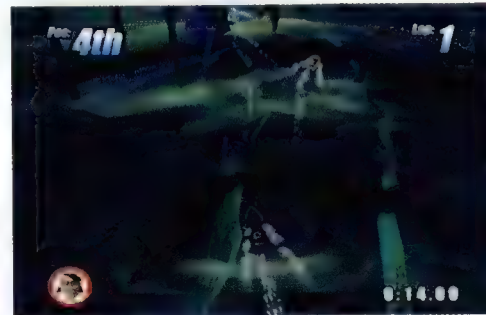
↑ The skeleton wants to party, but his bony fingers are pretty easy to avoid.



↑ If you fall asleep on the sands, it's only to be expected that miniature cars will drive over your sunburned chest.



↑ A small step for man but a big leap for a tiny car.



↑ The water looks pretty good and driving in it is fun.

>>> ample opportunity for trash talk
- use your imagination.

While the gameplay is solid, and undeniably fun, the product as a whole does have its shortcomings. Aside from the two new game modes, Bomb Tag and GP, the core gameplay is essentially the same as the old PS One version. There's no networking option, and since there's no such thing as an Xbox multi-tap, the number of players on screen can only go up to four. There are some tracks to unlock, but a game so simple defuses any mystery they may hold.

Then there are the contestants. Each of the little cars now has a little person inside it, adhering to a banal stereotype. There's a cop, a hillbilly, a woman, an old woman, a fat man, an American and so on. Each race begins with a close-up of their little heads, and the victor says something inane when the race is finished. Luckily the cars are so small on screen during the race that their faces are impossible to make out.

The music is nothing to write home about, either. The frantic pace of play is defused to some extent by the lingering suspicion that you're trapped inside a giant elevator. The loading times leave a lot to be desired too. Since each menu screen insists on revealing detailed rolling footage of the choice in action, a simple switch like changing tracks becomes somewhat time-consuming. A plain text menu could have expunged all this unnecessary loading.

Micro Machines is a party game through and through. While there are more intense Xbox games that can be played with a single friend, the gameplay mix is bang on for the four-player threshold. It's ideal for quick bursts of play, perhaps early in an evening before you go on to something more intense.



THE VERDICT

POWER

Smooth action through huge environments, but it doesn't exactly push the hardware.

STYLE

Garish characters, silly vehicles, preposterous settings, fruity menus. The exact opposite of style.

IMMERSION

Intense, breakneck, old-school gameplay. It's *Super Sprint* on crack.

LIFESPAN

Not suitable for lengthy sittings, but you can come back to it time and again.

GOOD POINTS

- ↑
 - +
 - +
 - +
- KILLER GAMEPLAY.
STACKS OF TRACKS.
TOO STUPID FOR WORDS.

BAD POINTS

- ↓
 -
 -
 -
- LONG LOADING TIMES.
NO NETWORK SUPPORT.
NOT FOR SELF-CONSCIOUS TYPES.

SUMMARY

Micro Machines game is more of the same. It's fun and all, but not Xbox exclusive, and nothing revolutionary.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

7.2/10

>>> PREVIOUSLY: Incoming Preview - Issue 09, page 028

>>> COMING SOON: Tips - Issue 11

REAL MICRO MACHINE: IN 1997, AUSTRALIAN SCIENTISTS DEVELOPED THE SUB-SUB-SUB COMPACT. REPORTED TO BE THE SMALLEST CAR IN THE WORLD. IT WAS THE SIZE OF A GRAIN OF RICE WITH A TOP SPEED OF 0.22 MPH. NOT BIG, BUT VERY CLEVER.



↑ That's a shadow from a dome you can see on the court, not a massive daddy long legs.



↑ Yes, you might well wipe your brow.



↑ Diving - great for reaching further.

It's yet another tennis game - the fourth on Xbox in the same number of months!

TENNIS MASTERS SERIES 2003

WORDS: JON ATTAWAY

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: MICROIDS

PUBLISHER: MICROIDS

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 1

PLAYERS: 1-4

WEBSITE: WWW.MICROIDS.COM

THE BRIEF

TENNIS. Come on, you should know what tennis is by now. You shouldn't even be looking at this box, really.

THERE ARE SOME amazing games on Xbox. You can fight convincing aliens in beautiful environments. You can scream around circuits in the best motorbiking game ever. You can warp time in a mind-bending platform game starring a cat with a clever Hoover.

One thing you can't do yet, though, is have an enjoyable, awesome game of tennis.

This peeves us somewhat, actually. We're all rather partial to a spot of *Virtua Tennis 2* on Dreamcast and see no reason why the Xbox can't have a game of similar stature. And that's because there is no reason.

The galling truth is that every tennis game to enter the workings of our beloved console has fallen short of this lofty ideal. In fact, *Slam Tennis* (Issue 05. 6.7) aside, they've been offensively

bad. *Pro Tennis WTA Tour* (Issue 07, 1.9) and *Fila World Tour Tennis* (Issue 09, 2.6) are the games in question. A combined score of 4.5 tells the story of those two stinkers.

This month it's the turn of *Tennis Masters Series 2003*. How does it fit into the litany of tennis tragedy? Is it up there with *Slam* or down there with *WTA*? Well, the person standing nearby watching the game as it was reviewed just said this: "This game looks like arse." Then he walked off.

That very professional judgement sums it all up very nicely. But why is this game "arse"? Much the same reason as the other poor tennis games, really - the fact that it's just so frustratingly unresponsive.

Briefly tapping a direction on the Left thumbstick makes your player walk for a few paces in that direction, rather than just take one step. Once started, this movement animation can't be stopped, so you have to wait until your player has finished walking before you can give any further instruction.

If you were unfortunate enough to tap him in the wrong direction, you've no chance of returning the ball. This is rubbish.

Other crapness? Well, on the default setting, you can make your serve (with one button press; we never served a single fault all the time we played, never mind a double), then go and mow the lawn, have a shower, pump up your bicycle tyres, then go back to the game and make your next shot. Tennis isn't slow, but this game certainly is. This, too, is rubbish.



↑ Footprints on the clay court are a nice touch.



↑ That's not going to do his knees much good. Hard court. Ouch.

BONUS INFO

I'M KNACKERED

One original touch in the game is the fatigue meter. Your poor player gets tired during the match, so control the court and wear the other guy out.

CHOICE? EH?

There's a shocking lack of options in *Tennis Master Series 2003*. Play a season or an exhibition match. How stingy is that? Where's the imagination?

AM I HOT OR NOT? Not a difficult question to answer, really

Some players in *TMS2003* have funny faces. We thought you'd like to laugh at them with us.



Charles Montagne thinks he's cool. No, Sir.



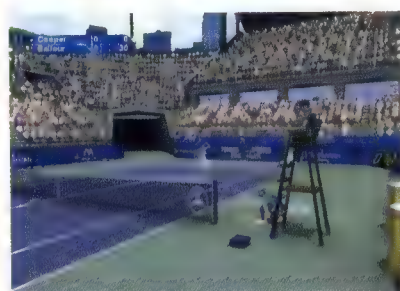
Enrique Domingo is camper than tents.



Peter Strauss is... just wrong, somehow.



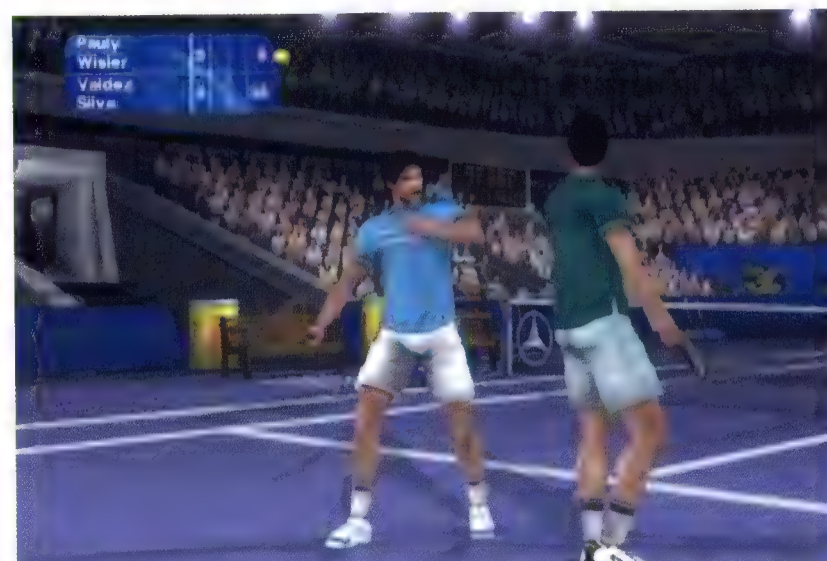
"Kiss my face!"



There are some nice views of the courts...



...and some good lighting too.



"What are you looking at? It's not my fault I walk five yards after a mere tap of the stick."

Still, the speed is something that can be rectified slightly by playing on Pro level or above - and if you have reactions faster than an anaesthetised sloth, you're a pro.

Being pro doesn't change the fact that players look like they're suffering from rickets. Their legs don't look right, even when waiting to receive a serve in a standing position. This too - you've guessed it - is rubbish.

One thing the game does have over its competitors is the range of shots you can play. You can put a decent amount of direction on your strokes, making rallies more strategic than the catastrophically stilted action of *Pro WTA*.

That is, of course, if a rally gets going. The different shots are markedly different, too, so there is a point to hitting a lob. But it doesn't change the fact you can't play a decent game

of tennis. It's supposed to be a fast-paced sport, for goodness sake, you need to be able to move quickly and make decisions quickly. You can't with *Tennis Masters*, so what's the point?

We'll give you a clue - there is no point. We can't understand why no-one has managed to match *Virtua Tennis 2* yet, and we suspect no-one will until the Sega folk themselves decide to crack their knuckles, sit at their development keyboard and deliver the third in the series.

It's a shame that we have to say such things, but the fact is you're currently a bit hamstrung if you want a top quality tennis title on your beloved Xbox. *Slam Tennis* is still the closest we've got.

Developers, take note. If you're making a tennis game that's not at least as good as *ST*, don't bother.



THE VERDICT

POWER

There's nothing particularly impressive technically, but nothing truly bad, either.

STYLE

The players all have bandy legs and funny faces. The courts are nice though.

IMMERSION

You may become immersed in self-hatred for buying the game - so don't.

LIFESPAN

It's got 'back to the shop' written all over it due to the fundamentally flawed gameplay.

GOOD POINTS

- YOU CAN DIRECT SHOTS - A REVELATION.

BAD POINTS

- UNRESPONSIVE CONTROLS.
- SLUGGISH MATCHES.
- NOT LIKE THE SPORT.
- PLEASE, MUMMY, MAKE THE NASTY TENNIS GAME GO AWAY

SUMMARY

Another tedious tennis title with almost nothing to recommend. Please, Sega, give us *Virtua Tennis 3*.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

3.0 10

PREVIOUSLY: *TMS2003* was kept secret. Not hard to see why...

COMING SOON: Tips - Issue 11. Perhaps

NEW BALLS, PLEASE. DOG OWNERS WHO CHOOSE TO CASTRATE THEIR INNOCENT, LOVING HOUNDS CAN MAKE THEMSELVES FEEL LESS GUILTY BY KITTING THEIR POOCH OUT WITH PROSTHETIC TESTICLES.

BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM



1 THE DEFENCE IS trembling as Golden Balls himself steps up and strikes his range.



2 With more than just a blazer (wow!), Beckham does what he does best.



3 GOAL! The keeper is yelling as the ball flies into the net and the crowd erupts.



↑ Accuracy? No sweat, as this Robert Pires model shows.



↑ 'Safe Hands' Seaman proving his worth once again.



↑ "How do you get your whites so sparkling, Olivier?" "Through Shear-er hard work."

"FIFA HAS BEEN TAKEN BY THE SCRUFF OF THE NECK AND GIVEN A DAMN GOOD SEEING-TO"

» although by the time you read this review, he'll probably be sporting a natty set of dreads or something.

Free kicks and corners have been completely re-worked. The giant, childlike red arrow of previous versions that was both inaccurate and intrusive has been replaced by a subtle and more skilful method.

Now, in a free kick situation, the Left thumbstick moves the target cursor to where you want to shoot, while the Right thumbstick is used to place a small target on the ball so that you can add spin or bend.

This method works very well and makes free kicks an actual scoring opportunity, something lacking even in the *Pro Evolution* series. Think of any snooker or pool game you've played and you'll get the picture.

The controls have also changed, and the cheesy, arcade-style effects evident in *2002 FIFA World Cup* (like the ball swooshing like a DHL parcel whenever a shot was struck) have been relegated to the reserves.

Most noticeably, your players will now sprint when you hold down the Right trigger, as opposed to the older method of repeatedly pressing the Y button in the style of an old-school *Track and Field* event. Pressing the Y button now performs a through ball, which

encourages defence-splitting passes and adds a welcome tactical edge to the formula.

The only downside of the new control method is the use of the Right thumbstick for 'freestyle' tricks such as feints and stepovers. This was previously used to perform rapid one-twos, and it should have perhaps stayed like that because the new trick method is hit-and-miss. It activates only when you're in close proximity to an opposing player, and it often only results in random tricks, thus diminishing the feeling of complete control.

Another minor black mark is the default speed setting (lightning quick, much faster than *2002 FIFA World Cup*) which leads to players skating briskly around the pitch in Torvill and Dean fashion. But this can be overcome by switching the speed to Slow.

The *FIFA* series has been taken by the scruff of the neck and given a damn good seeing-to. There is improvement over old versions and the attention to detail (see the Bonus Info) is superb.

As a soccer experience, this is accurate, playable and as authentic as ever. The game still has its flaws, most notably in the controls, but *FIFA 2003* is a Premiership-quality title and currently rates as the best soccer game on Xbox.



THE VERDICT

POWER

Detailed players and mightily good replays. Xbox is flexing its muscles here. Cardboard crowd, though.

STYLE

This is licence-heavy, and everything is more polished than Mr. Sheen's mantelpiece.

IMMERSION

Many tournaments and leagues. Buying star players for underling teams never gets boring.

LIFESPAN

If you like football, this is just the ticket. You're only limited by your - and your mates' - skill and patience.

GOOD POINTS

- THE MOST FOOTBALL-LIKE FIFA EVER.
- LOOKS BETTER THAN FOOTBALLERS' WIVES.
- DETAIL-TASTIC, EVEN DOWN TO KIT SPONSORSHIP.

BAD POINTS

- SPEED/CONTROL PROBS.
- TYPICAL COMMENTARY.

SUMMARY

A highly polished sports game, and a great improvement over previous *FIFAs*. This is the best footy game you can get on Xbox.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

8.4/10

» PREVIOUSLY: This is the first appearance for *FIFA 2003*
» COMING SOON: Tips - Issue 11



↑ Being able to watch the game as well as manage the team is a big draw.

A management sim with more than just stats

LMA MANAGER 2003

WORDS: STEVE O'ROURKE

DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS
PUBLISHER: CODEMASTERS
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 21
PLAYERS: 1-2
WEBSITE: WWW.CODEMASTERS.COM

THE BRIEF

FOOTY BOSS sim where you see the matches in action as well as make all of the vital decisions.

THE WEATHER'S GETTING colder, the clocks are going back and the nights are drawing in. It's the perfect time of year to have a football management sim tucked away snugly in your Xbox. That's presuming you enjoy soccer, of course,

because you really need to enjoy all aspects of the beautiful sport to get the most from *LMA Manager 2003*.

At the opposite end of the experience scale from the instant rush of adrenaline delivered by football action games (see *FIFA 2003* on page 070), this game focuses on the heavyweight discipline of managing all the factors involved in getting your 11 favourite men to knock a ball around a pitch in a (hopefully) winning manner.

These factors are plentiful. In addition to the task of leading your team to victory, you have the responsibility of juggling the finances, hiring the backroom staff, negotiating player contracts, ducking and diving in the transfer market, rebuilding or expanding the stadium, coaching the players - the list is extensive.

You can even choose which advertising deal is most lucrative for the pitch side hoardings. About the only thing outside of your jurisdiction is the contents of the half-time meat pies.

But this level of detail is not daunting, and is where the title's defining strength lies. The game is designed to be accessible to all and is presented in a style that will not overawe a casual fan or bore a veteran.

Navigation - often the key element in the success of stat-based games - is mercifully simple. A choice of eight main categories operated by both triggers and the Right thumbstick leads to numerous sub directories.

Depending entirely on your management style, responsibility for various tasks can be delegated to staff, so you can spend more time on the team rather than worrying about the incidental stuff.

Unlike *Championship Manager Season 01/02*, *LMA Manager 2003* lets you actually watch the game and offer rudimentary managing tactics from the dugout. You're even invited to view the edited highlights in a TV-style post match analysis with commentary from Messrs. Lineker and Hansen.

This additional use of graphics helps to create a more hands-on feel. It gets you much more involved in the action than reading a text description of a game, because match action, by any definition, is the main event.

LMA 2003 is not as comprehensive as *Championship Manager*, especially in the player data department; nor is it as focussed on team selection as the latter title is.

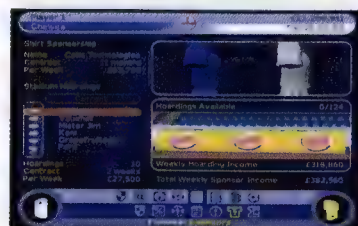
But that is *LMA's* strength, because it offers an accessible way for casual fans to experience the highs and lows of being the gaffer without being completely blinded by science and statistics.



↑ Undoubtedly the fixture of the season.



↑ Stamford Bridge in all its glory.



↑ Adverts mean dosh - don't be proud.



↑ Fine French ball control in effect.

BONUS INFO

SHORT OF TIME?
 Then play one of the scenarios, including five games to beat the drop, earning promotion with eight matches left and a semi-final comeback.

THE VERDICT

POWER
 Match graphics are passable but not exemplary, the searchable player database is nice and quick.

STYLE
 A well-designed menu system combined with decent highlights result in a polished look.

IMMERSION
 Got any friends? You won't have if you get heavily involved in a league campaign.

LIFESPAN
 If being the boss floats your boat this may never leave your Xbox. It'll last as long as your patience.

GOOD POINTS

- ACCESSIBLE WITHOUT BEING SIMPLE.
- MATCH GRAPHICS ARE A VERY COOL IDEA.
- EASILY NAVIGATED.

BAD POINTS

- VISUALS COULD BE NICER.
- DUGOUT COMMANDS ARE SLUGGISH.

SUMMARY

For a lighter and visually more exciting look at the footy management biz than *Cham Man*, this is just the ticket.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

8.0/10

PREVIOUSLY: This is the first time *LMA* has graced these pages
COMING SOON: Tips - Issue 12



↑ It's just like '80s cartoon *Spider-Man and his Amazing Friends*... only good.



↑ Cable, a recent addition to the X-Men.



↑ Featuring 3D rendered backdrops.



↑ Captain America can lose his shield.

Superheroes fighting arcade heroes - again

MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2

WORDS: CAMERON RAPMUND

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

PUBLISHER: CAPCOM

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 29

PLAYERS: 1-2

WEBSITE: WWW.CAPCOM.COM

THE BRIEF

A SECOND reteaming of heroes, both game and super. There's also 2D triple-tag team fighting.

MARVEL VS CAPCOM 2 was originally released about two years ago in the arcades and on Sega Dreamcast. At the time it was one of the most impressive 2D fighters ever made, and thanks to the fact that no one seems to make 2D fighters anymore, it still is. Now Capcom has brought the game to Xbox where it can be enjoyed by more gamers than just the few who own a Dreamcast.

Marvel vs Capcom 2 features an extensive line-up of fighters, including characters from the Marvel universe (eg Spider-Man, The Incredible Hulk, Iceman and Wolverine) and from the Capcom universe (eg Ryu, Strider, Jill Valentine and Mega Man). Additionally, there are twelve unlockable fighters, as well as a huge range of other bonuses including character art and new costumes. The sheer number of characters and unlockable features add a bit of depth and

replayability to the game, which is something that's often missing from fighting games.

The gameplay is similar to other Capcom 2D fighters such as *Street Fighter II*, but with a few significant differences. Fights are three-on-three battles, with the combatants able to tag in and out at any time. Tagged-out characters can also be called on to help the main character with a range of assist moves. The game also has a strong emphasis on super attacks, each character having a few insane-looking super combos. It's even possible to have all three characters perform a super at once.

The game's emphasis on super combos highlights one of its biggest flaws. These moves take a great deal of precision to execute well, and sometimes this precision is not available with the directional pad on the standard Xbox controller. The game would benefit greatly from being played with an arcade stick, if only there was an official Xbox arcade stick available.

In all other respects, the Xbox version of *Marvel vs Capcom 2* is identical to the Dreamcast version. Even the graphics are identical, which is not necessarily a bad thing. The beautiful 3D backgrounds behind smoothly animated 2D sprites still look great. While the graphics have stood the test of time, the same can't be said for the soundtrack. It's a strange collection of jazz fusion, all of which seem out of place and slightly annoying.

Marvel vs Capcom 2 is a great 2D fighter which hasn't aged a bit since its original release. Hopefully it's the first of many great 2D fighters on Xbox (like *Capcom Vs SNK 2 EO* in March 2003! - Ed)

BONUS INFO

MAKE MINE MARVEL

Spider-Man, Iceman, Cyclops, Hulk, Captain America, Iron Man, Magneto and Storm all appear in the game. But no Fantastic Four. Boo.



THE VERDICT

POWER

Fantastic animation and dynamic character design but they're all a little pixelly round the edges.

STYLE

A wild jazz soundtrack combines with a great comic book look to bring out the spirit of the game.

IMMERSION

Hypnotic triple-team special moves will keep you coming back for more mayhem.

LIFESPAN

Loads of characters to get stuck into; thousands of tag-team combinations to try.



GOOD POINTS

- ♦ LOADS OF CHARACTERS.
- ♦ INSANE COMBOS, AND IT'S LIGHTNING-FAST.



BAD POINTS

- NO NEW FEATURES FOR XBOX VERSION.
- CONTROL SCHEME NOT SUITED TO THE XBOX CONTROL PAD.

SUMMARY

One of the best 2D fighters ever is now on the Xbox. Definitely worth a look, especially if you're a fighting fans.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

8.2/10

PREVIOUSLY: This is the first appearance of *Marvel vs. Capcom 2*

COMING SOON: Tips - Issue 11



↑ *Dawn of Fate* hopes to recreate the futuristic wars as visualised in James Cameron's Terminator films.

The father from the future fights for the future.

TERMINATOR DAWN OF FATE

WORDS: JAMES COTTEE

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: PARADIGM ENTERTAINMENT
PUBLISHER: ATARI
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
PLAYERS: 1
WEBSITE: WWW.TERMINATORGAME.COM

THE BRIEF

FIRST/THIRD PERSON action adventure where you shoot lots of terminator robots and hopefully live another day

AS SERGEANT REESE, loyal friend of, and time-travelling father of resistance leader John Connor, your mission is to safeguard humanity's last hope in the dying days of the war with the machines. Gameplay involves wiping out large numbers of recognisable robot foes from the films, as

well as new menacing kill-bots devised especially for the game. Lumbering waves of obsolete terminators are so weak they can be taken down with an electric baton, but the more recent models crawl and clutch to the bitter end.

The action is mostly third-person, with dynamic camera angles following the player's avatar through the 3D environments. There are limited role-playing and exploration elements, ultimately boiling down to the old game of Find the Key. At certain points it becomes desirable to switch to first person view. This turns the game

into a real shooting gallery, with lumbering androids sputtering and falling to bits under a hail of hot plasma.

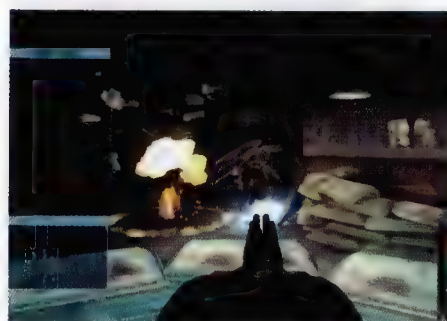
An obvious comparison can be made with *Devil May Cry*. DMC also starred a main character who ran around in confined spaces blasting away with twin handguns, darting from one camera angle to the next like there's no tomorrow. While stylish, it only clocked around ten hours of play time. Barring the compulsion to do the same thing over and over again at higher levels of difficulty, its brevity branded it as disposable, a trait shared by *Dawn of Fate*.

Reese and his post-apocalyptic buddies may have better dress sense than Dante, but their co-ordination leaves much to be desired. Add camera angles that like to chop and change without rhyme or reason, and the control method becomes confusing. Your future soldier moves relative his position on the screen, not the way he's facing. It can take as little as one single camera change to leave you completely disoriented, and probably dead.

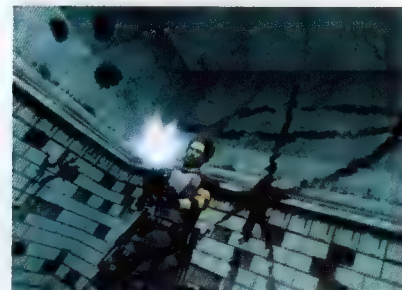
Dawn of Fate has all the hallmarks of a game developed simultaneously for PS2. Everything seems somehow stunted, with a sick glossy sheen that's supposed to make up for it. There's none of the balanced play of *TimeSplitters 2*, or the epic scope of *Halo*, let alone the profound sense of realism in *Splinter Cell*. It's a Frankenstein's monster composed of tattered and worn components from other games, with a hand-me-down aesthetic not unlike John Connor's secret army. The discerning gamer can do a lot better.



↑ That's it. Save those washing machines.



↑ Why wasn't Arnie this easy to kill in the films?



↑ Trapped like a rat in a trap.

BONUS INFO

ONLY FICTION

According to the story, World War III was supposed happen back in '97. You'll note we're all still here. This could be because it's all make believe. That's right - terminators aren't real.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Performance varies widely, with smooth frame rates, muted colours, and sloppy animation.

STYLE

Very true to the Terminator universe. Heavy metal and computer effects bang on.

IMMERSION

Suspension of disbelief is hamstrung by the ultra-shonky camera angles and loose controls.

LIFESPAN

A short game, only given any sort of lasting challenge by higher difficulty settings

GOOD POINTS

- ↑ AUTHENTIC TERMINATOR ACTION.
- ↑ FAST PACE.
- ↑ VARIED PLAY STYLES.

BAD POINTS

- ↓ FAIRLY SHORT.
- ↓ BAD CAMERA.
- ↓ TEPID CONTROLS.

SUMMARY

Quite the disappointment. With little satisfaction in the way of action or adventure, it's redundant on the Xbox.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

5.1/10

PREVIOUSLY: Issue 06, page 030

COMING SOON: Tips & cheats

A RECENT ROBOT 'FREE WILL' EXPERIMENT IN MELBOURNE RESULTED IN THE ROBOT TRYING TO ESCAPE - IT GOT AS FAR AS THE CAR PARK.





↑ A year older, and just a bit wiser. Harry's second adventure is loads better than the original.

Oh we're just mad about Harry...

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

WORDS: KEVIN CHEUNG

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: EUROCOM
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
PLAYERS: 1
WEBSITE: WWW.EA.COM

THE BRIEF

HARRY Potter's back for a brand new adventure, based on the second book in which he stars.

A VIDEOGAME adaptation of *The Chamber of Secrets* is an interesting proposition, for it stands as a very pertinent illustration of why film tie-ins are almost always mediocre.

Gamers come in all shapes and sizes. We all approach the ultimate

conclusion of a game from different perspectives. This freedom stands incongruously beside the notion of having the each and every step of the story pre-determined for you, be it from a book or movie. There's no surprise, since there's essentially only one interpretation. This isn't a game - it's a "best of" collection of the more exciting moments from the film.

What's worse is that if you've been exposed to neither the film nor the book, there will be gaping holes in the game's continuity. It's offensive to think that the full *Harry Potter* experience can only be realised by supplementing the video game with a book and a film.

To that end, this adventure concerns Potter's second year at Hogwarts, in which he learns new spells, plays more Quidditch, and solves the mystery behind a series of murders. By day, players can entertain simple puzzles in order to learn the latest spells, from lighting up dark areas and tearing things up to turning inanimate objects into birds. By night, Potter can stalk through the halls of Hogwarts, exploring places like the Gryffindor Common Room, all in a bid to solve the game's many quests - including the mystery of the Chamber of Secrets.

Fans of the book will be delighted by the production. It is teeming with familiar locations, all luxuriously detailed, from Diagon Alley to the Herbology Greenhouse. Visuals are clear and striking enough to impress even the most jaded of gamers, with fluid animations throughout and rock-solid 60fps motion. There's even the bonus of a control interface that's similar to the lauded *Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time*. Pulling at the triggers lets players lock-on and strafe at will, while the front face buttons can be freely toggled between different spells and actions.

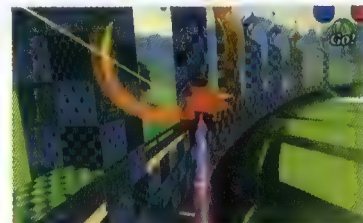
This is textbook adventure gaming, executed to a high standard. But that comes with the qualification that any such game should be able to reach this standard; that it doesn't present anything new; and that the only thing driving force towards finishing the game is one's love for the book or film. If you have no such love for either, this game will be quite meaningless. At best it'll only provide a piecemeal understanding of the *Harry Potter* world. On the other hand, if you're the kind of person who thinks *Harry* is God's gift to humankind, you've probably bought it already.



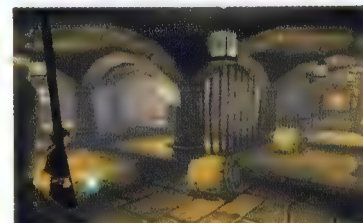
BONUS INFO

SPELL SWITCH

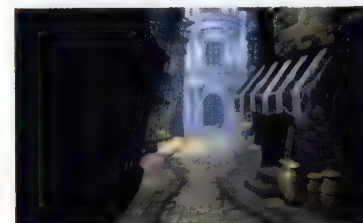
The X, Y and B buttons can be switched at any time to control a variety of different spells at any one time.



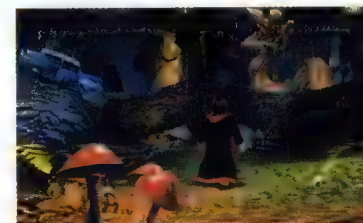
↑ Look at the Nimbus 2000 fly!



↑ Harry invades the set of *Gladiator*.



↑ Diagon Alley. Stupendously huge.



↑ The magic mushrooms are behind you.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Not bad, considering it's a multiformat film licence and all. Dolby Digital sound is a plus.

STYLE

Childish, young, but amazingly fluid and coherent throughout. It's Potter through and through.

IMMERSION

Large, expansive level designs ensure that Potter fans will feel right at home.

LIFESPAN

Some challenges are formulaic, whereas others can be replayed over and over.

GOOD POINTS

- EXCELLENT VISUALS AND LEVEL DESIGNS.
- FAITHFUL TO THE BOOK.

BAD POINTS

- TOTALLY UNLIKEABLE CHARACTERS.
- PREDICTABLE GAMEPLAY.

SUMMARY

One of the best film tie-in we've seen, but succumbing to the inherent definitional flaws of such games.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

7.0/10

PREVIOUSLY: Issue 08, page 030

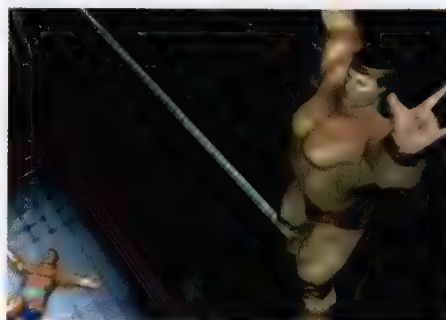
COMING SOON: Hints & cheats



↑ Back in the day, Hulk Hogan wasn't as chiselled or muscular as his current WWE self.



↑ "Ha! My arms are bigger than your head!"



↑ Cool pose. Shame about the mullet.

Now why can't WWE2 come out this fast?

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING 2

WORDS: RALPH PANEBIANCO

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: ACCLAIM SALT LAKE CITY
PUBLISHER: ACCLAIM
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
PLAYERS: 1-4
WEBSITE: WWW.XBOX.COM/AU/
LEGENDSOFWRESTLING/DEFAULT.HTM

THE BRIEF

ASSUME the role of one of the meaty wrestling legends of yesteryear and fight for fame and glory!

SO I GET A call from my editor last week and he tells me that he wants me to review *Legends of Wrestling 2*. I says, "Kev, how could I possibly do that? I only reviewed the first one about five months ago so they couldn't have punched out a sequel already. Is it

just the same game, but with Andre the Giant bunged in for good measure?" And sure enough, it was. *Legends of Wrestling 2* is everything that it predecessor was and a little, tiny bit more. But when it comes down to it, it's just the same game, topped off with a big fat French man.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the original, the game is a standard wrestling title. You take your chosen wrestler into the ring and square off against up to three opponents. Punch, kick, grapple, throw and pin for all your worth until only one man is left standing.

There are different modes of play. Exhibition mode lets you get into the action right away, and the Story mode is interesting because, well, there is in fact no story at all. Your promoter, a hairy-chested, "gold chain with a dollar sign" wearing individual by the name of Randall, leads you by the hand around different locations throughout America, and promises you fame and fortune just so long as you fill up your popularity bar enough while fighting.

The graphics are nearly identical to the original *Legends of Wrestling*, and the only noticeable change to the game's appearance is the quality of the character animations. They are now among the smoothest and most fluid you will see in any wrestling game. Sadly, the remainder of the visual component remains quite boring, bland and the washed out.

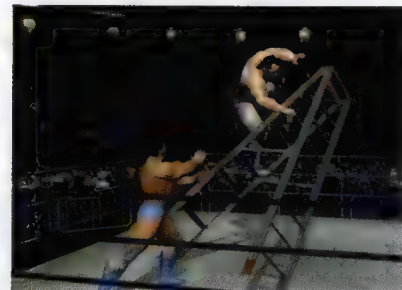
Similarly, there have been few additions to the gameplay. The parry system has been tidied up a bit, and it's now a little more demanding on the timing of the button presses. Since it's harder to perform a successful parry, the game is just a little more challenging than before, and probably for the better.

Despite this minor improvement, *Legends of Wrestling 2* is still a very ordinary wrestling game. Even fans of the original, if there are any, will be disappointed with the apparent 'sameness'. Tragically as well, fans of the genre are still left wanting, considering how relatively outdated the only decent alternative, *WWE Raw*, is. Good for a rental or a few multiplayer laughs, but this one ain't worth your Christmas stocking.

BONUS INFO

TAP-OUT

The countering system in *Legends of Wrestling 2* is largely the same as before, requiring the player to press a certain button within a given time limit to escape a hold or throw.



↑ When stunts go terribly wrong...

THE VERDICT

POWER

Smooth character animations but washed out visuals still plague.

STYLE

Gameplay is the standard wrestling formula. Nothing new.

IMMERSION

Shallow story mode. Multiplayer is good as always though.

LIFESPAN

Create a wrestler and plenty of unique endings will give you plenty of thrills.

GOOD POINTS

- SMOOTH CHARACTER ANIMATIONS.
- MULTI-PLAYER BATTLE ROYAL.
- ANDRE THE GIANT.

BAD POINTS

- BRINGS NOTHING NEW TO THE GENRE.
- WASHED OUT LOOK.

SUMMARY

Not bad but never truly good. Die hard fans might enjoy it, but everyone else would've been there and done it already.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

6.0/10

PREVIOUSLY: *Legends of Wrestling 2* took us all by surprise
COMING SOON: Hints & cheats

ANDRE THE GIANT, THE BEHEMOTH THAT PUTS TODAY'S GIANT TO SHAME, WEIGHED AN INCREDIBLE 520 POUNDS BACK IN HIS DAY. THAT'S NEARLY 260 KILOGRAMS!

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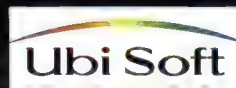


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↑ You can barely make out the tiny little tanks as they fire their feeble rockets at the dragon above.

Pest control of a very different kind

REIGN OF FIRE

WORDS: KEVIN CHEUNG

DEVELOPER: KUJU ENTERTAINMENT
PUBLISHER: BAM! ENTERTAINMENT
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 15
PLAYERS: 1
WEBSITE: WWW.BAM4FUN.COM

THE BRIEF
 KNOCK flying lizards out of the sky with an arsenal of weapons and save the future of the human race.

IN AN AGE where green screens and digital backdrops can bear the load for major Hollywood productions, films of a previously impossible scale are within reach. *The Lord of the Rings* is an example of the newly evolved medium done right; *Attack of the Clones* showed that eye candy alone won't necessarily save an average story; and *Reign of Fire*, which starred Christian Bale and Matthew McConaughey, showed that no amount of CG could help a story that just didn't add up.

But it was a good idea - that humanity is driven to the brink of extinction by dragons that had been lying dormant beneath the earth's surface. And since video games is a medium limited only by the imagination, the video game adaptation of the film had, in theory, a better chance of meeting that potential. Unfortunately the developer's vision lacked breadth, probably tunnelled to meet the greater commercial desire for a film licence tie-in. The result, sadly, is a

half-hearted game that fails in the same places as its Hollywood source material.

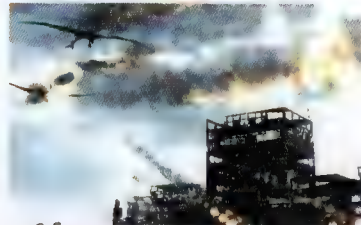
The main attraction is the presence of dragons. Lots of them. There are swarms of them, cluttering up the skyline, blasting a fiery gale of terror on all who cower below. Like the movie, there is an awe-inspiring immensity about the dragons as they swoop all the way down to ground level with frightening speed, missing you by mere inches with their crusty scales and claws before gliding back up until they appear as tiny dots in the horizon.

And where the film provided an abominably implausible story, this video game adaptation follows laughably behind. Your job is basically to shoot down the giant lizards from the back of your off-road vehicle. You follow them around in the heat of battle, point your guns at them, and pull the trigger. If you've seen the movie at all, you'll know that you shouldn't last more than a few seconds before being abruptly taken on a tour of Barbecue City. But here, it's as though somebody had a go at the Warthog levels in *Halo* and thought, "I could drive around in this thing forever!" - because that's exactly what *Reign of Fire* is.

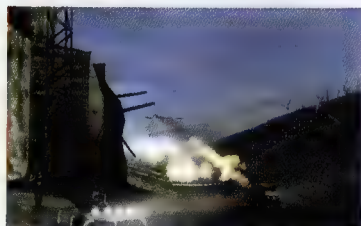
Bar the inclusion of rockets and heat-seeking missiles, it feels and plays exactly like the Warthog sections of *Halo*. With *Reign of Fire*, though, you'll need to dial back the quality of the physics engine, the complex geography of the level designs, as well as the grand visual effects, and what you're left with is a game that's gone from being 'not necessarily a bad idea' to, at best, a rental. To be fair, it's worth mentioning that players can eventually assume the role of a dragon, but it'd take some perseverance to get that far.



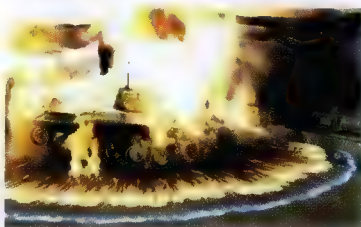
↑ Dragon takes pet human for a walk.



↑ Everything gets torched by the dragons.



↑ Forts provide some limited defence.



↑ [Insert curry joke here.]

BONUS INFO

LOCK ON

Dragons are quick targets and very difficult to aim ahead of. This is all solved with the handy heat-seeking missiles, though.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Looking quite rough, at times almost like a PS One game. Clunky, bland textures too.

STYLE

Squalid colours and designs, but the land-dwelling critters definitely weren't in the movie.

IMMERSION

Unwieldy controls reduces the game to a very surgical point-and-shoot exercise.

LIFESPAN

A rental, at best; the ability to play as a dragon isn't much of a reason to come back for more.

GOOD POINTS

- LOTS AND LOTS OF DRAGONS
- EASY INTERFACE WITH THE HALO-STYLE CONTROLS

BAD POINTS

- SLUGGISH CONTROLS
- REPETITIVE SHOOTING ACTION

SUMMARY

Wasted potential, but not a total disaster. *Reign of Fire* is passable fun, even as just a basic shooter.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

5.8/10

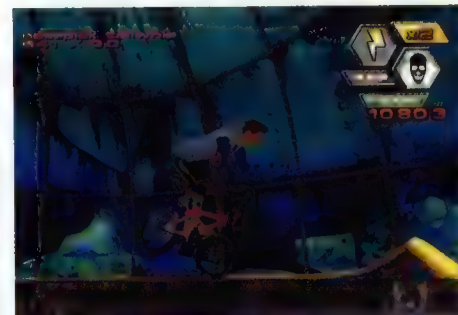
PREVIOUSLY: This is *Reign of Fire*'s first appearance.
 COMING SOON: Hints & cheats



↑ Pure fantasy: you won't find tracks quite as crazy as this in any other game.



↑ Almost indistinguishable from Mat Hoffman.



↑ Watch out for that Toxin Meter.

Where corporate America will kill for your money

TOXIC GRIND

WORDS: KEVIN CHEUNG

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: BLUE SHIFT

PUBLISHER: THQ

RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER 15

PLAYERS: 2

WEBSITE: WWW.THQ.COM

THE BRIEF

PERFORM as many BMX tricks as you can before the poison catches up and kills you!

YOU RIDE, OR you die. That's the moniker of *Toxic Grind*. Taking a page from future-shock films and books like *The Running Man*, *Toxic Grind* is a gameshow of extreme bloodsports where victory is rewarded with fame and another day to live, and defeat is met with a cruel, bloody death, probably by some sharp, spinning metallic implement. In today's world we'd call it barbaric. But since the ancient Romans could call it entertainment, so too can this stark future world.

Best described as *Mat Hoffman* meets *Deathrow* (without the language, mind), players are put in control of a talented young freestyle BMX rider who's roped into competing on the television show called *Toxic Grind*. In a bid to boost ratings, a new element has been introduced to the show: poison, which slowly seeps into your body. The longer you sit around to admire the scenery, the faster the poison takes hold and kills you. Perform a good series of tricks, however, and the effects of the poison will be countered, albeit slowly.

Without the limitation (and, conversely for most, the attraction) of having to portray real-world sporting heroes and locations, *Toxic Grind* must make its mark with creative park designs and game modes. To this end it achieves varying success, with oddly shaped ramps, rails, tubes and 360-degree loops placed in every open space. Players can spin, flip, grind, ride up walls and pop wheelies against virtually any surface; and with the poison meter constantly on the rise, there's continuous pressure to perform skilfully and spontaneously. Some of the level designs are quite fun, often breaking from the archaic "complete this list of tricks" blueprint of level progression, such as the Tug of War and Turf War modes, where players compete against CPU-controlled contestants.

Unfortunately, the levels are quite small, and there are peculiarities in the game engine can also be off-putting, as players move backwards, move up walls, and clip against invisible surfaces.

Also, despite being exclusive to Xbox, *Toxic Grind* isn't exactly among the prettier games we've tested. It was originally meant to be a multi-platform game, and those of you with a keen eye will spot that the graphics engine is powered by Renderware, a middleware solution for putting a game on any console. This means the visuals are dumbed down, neither here nor there, not optimised for any particular console.

The futuristic settings are the defining marks of *Toxic Grind*, and they certainly make the atmosphere a little edgier. However, they shouldn't be misinterpreted to be anything greater than mere window dressing. As an action sports game, *Toxic Grind* comes a little shy of hitting the mark for the genre, with challenges and gameplay that will be familiar to veterans of such games.

BONUS INFO

UNLOCKABLES

Each successful round earns points that can be spent on bike upgrades and rider stats. Newly completed tracks can then also be accessed in other sections of the game.



↑ Fate must've really had it in for him.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Not a great testament to the visual power of the Xbox - especially considering this is an "exclusive".

STYLE

Frequent comicbook cut-scenes, with lots of bright neon to portray future society.

IMMERSION

Great sound effects for the atmosphere, often disjointed by glitches in the game engine.

LIFESPAN

You'll play it a couple of times, then probably go back to *Mat Hoffman* or *Dave Mirra*.

GOOD POINTS

- ♦ CREATIVE LEVEL DESIGNS.
- ♦ GREAT VARIETY OF CHALLENGES.

BAD POINTS

- SMALL LEVELS.
- SOME FRUSTRATING CHALLENGES.
- ROUGH PATCHES IN THE VISUALS.

SUMMARY

A curious alternative to the *Hoffmans* and *Mirras* of the sports genre, if a little short and rough around the edges.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

6.6/10

➤ PREVIOUSLY: This is our first encounter with *Toxic Grind*
➤ COMING SOON: Hints & cheats



↑ Easy to get into, always a pleasure to look at... if only there was a bit more depth to it.

Good looking, globe trotting, slip-sliding stunt-busting

TRANSWORLD SNOWBOARDING

WORDS: JON ATTAWAY

GAME INFORMATION
 DEVELOPER: **HOUSEMARQUE**
 PUBLISHER: **INFOGRAMES**
 RELEASE DATE: **NOVEMBER 15**
 PLAYERS: **1-4**
 WEBSITE: **WWW.TRANSWORLDGAMES.COM**

THE BRIEF

TAKE TO THE world's prettiest slopes for a series of challenges in an arcade-like, Tony Hawk's-on-snow style.



Not only has every one of its preview versions looked amazing, exploiting the graphical grunt of Xbox to the full, but it has also taken the arcade approach to snowboarding action.

Much of the beauty of the screenshots is present in the finished game. The way the sun gleams on shiny groomed snow and dapples across thick powder is lovely, and highly evocative of the real thing.

And, unlike *Amped*, the slopes are crammed with incidental detail; lickle snow hares jump about, reindeers stand around grazing and snowmobiles buzz around the place.

A particularly nice touch is the way your goggles fall off if you land on your head. But the visual wonderment is let down by occasional juddery slowdown and the game is a tiny bit glitchy.

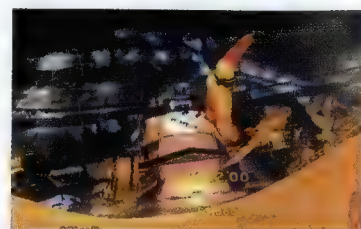
The way objects react when your 'boarder hits them is odd. Smashing your way into and through a herd of deer (come on, we had to try it) results in the animals dispersing as if made of fibreglass. It might not seem like much, but there are a handful of things like this that detract from the solidity of the game. It's a shame, because so much work has clearly gone into making it.

The main problem with *TransWorld Snowboarding*, though, is that it's too easy. Much too easy. If you've ever played another extreme sports game, you'll breeze through this like a veteran on the nursery slopes. It's almost impossible to fall over without trying really hard to do so, but this does mean that you can effortlessly put together the combos needed for the serious scores.

Keeping a massive combo going for ages is fun, but the excessive simplicity of play means there's little satisfaction in nailing a big one. Odds are you'll feel rather nonplussed after seeing most of what the game has to offer after a few goes. This probably won't see you through the long winter months ahead.

TransWorld Snowboarding isn't terrible by any means. But it is average in the extreme, and can't compete with *Amped*, unless you like your snowboarding really simple.

If you must have another arcade-style snowboarding game, you will get some entertainment from this. But there's months of play to be had from *Amped*.



↑ Spectacular views both day and night.



↑ Tricking against a chum is enjoyable.



↑ Perfect landing? Every time, sunshine.



↑ Look out for the pole!

BONUS INFO

SOUNDCACK

This game has some truly atrocious music, with death-rock seemingly captured from a medieval abattoir run by lunatics.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Some beautiful moments, spoiled by the judder man on occasion. Loading is a bit on the slow side.

STYLE

Lots and lots of little touches make the slopes very interesting places to explore.

IMMERSION

The simple gameplay and solid controls mean that you can quickly get into the game...

LIFESPAN

...but it also means you may tire of it before too long, because this isn't really one for the long term.

GOOD POINTS

- LOOKS SUPER.
- LOTS OF STAGES.
- MASSIVE COMBOS FEEL GOOD.

BAD POINTS

- FAR TOO EASY TO PLAY.
- GLITCHES AND SLOWDOWN REAR THEIR UGLY HEADS.

SUMMARY

A bit of a looker, granted, but the beauty's only pisle-deep. Boredom sets in once the views have been admired.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

6.1/10

PREVIOUSLY: *Transworld Snowboarding* dropped in from nowhere
 COMING SOON: Tips - Issue 11



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↑ Outlaw Golf lets players beat up their caddy using the meter at the bottom of the screen. Hilarious fun.

"Clubbing" isn't just a weekend social activity...

OUTLAW GOLF

WORDS: KEVIN CHEUNG

GAME INFORMATION	
DEVELOPER:	HYPNOTIX
PUBLISHER:	SIMON & SCHUSTER
RELEASE DATE:	OUT NOW
PLAYERS:	1-4
WEBSITE:	WWW.HYPNOTIX.COM

THE BRIEF

IT'S NO-holds-barred golf in this simple but humorous sports title. Beat up your caddy if you're too frustrated.

GOLF ISN'T MUCH of a spectator sport. At least to the more casual onlookers, the subtlety of exploiting the delicate curvature of a seemingly flat area of turf is lost compared to the graceful arc of a skilfully placed corner kick, or the exacting precision of a passing shot

down the line. There isn't much fanfare either. Besides the occasional fist-pumping action by younger folk like Tiger Woods or Sergio Garcia, they're all fairly conservative. Of course, golf is a great game to play in real life. It's just that these factors make it hard for newcomers to get into it.

Enter *Outlaw Golf*, a game that throws all the pretence and tradition out the window. It's loud, it's rude, it features hip-hoppers, trailer trash and strippers as contestants, and it embraces a culture of the kind of unsportsmanlike conduct we're taught as children to suppress. It is essentially the Adam Sandler film, *Happy Gilmore*, brought into videogame form; and we'd be doing *Outlaw Golf* an injustice if we didn't mention it, because that's exactly what it is. Don't believe us? Try this

on for size: you can beat the crap out of your caddy. No joke! If you've earned a Beating Token, you can press the Y button and start clubbing seven shades out of the poor sod.

The game is loaded with personality. The contestants are all bad-tempered and not afraid to throw a hissy fit on the course, which is fine because the commentator will continue to crack a few jokes at your expense.

Get past the humorous exterior, though, and you'll find that *Outlaw Golf* is a very plain, no-nonsense game. Gameplay is simplified to an extreme level where players need only worry about how much distance they can get per swing, although there are many options for selecting clubs and determining exactly which part of the ball you hit.

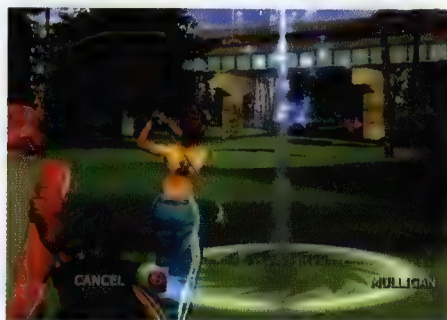
The highlight of *Outlaw Golf*'s gameplay is the virtual swing control. That is, you push the right analogue stick back and forth to simulate a golf swing. The straighter you swing, the more accurate the shot. Veer to the left or right, and it'll result in a badly sliced trajectory.

Unfortunately this isn't the most intuitive of control schemes. The Xbox control pad is just a tad too bulbous to make such precise movements. The shorter-range shots are particularly frustrating, not so much because the amount of power required is difficult to gauge, but because CPU-controlled players are much more proficient than any ordinary human player could hope to be.

Even still, with over 8 modes of play, *Outlaw Golf* has great value as a multiplayer game. Its gameplay is reminiscent of Sony's *Everybody's Golf* series, and its irreverent humour makes it a great game to play with drunken friends. This is the kind of game you'll be able to pick up and play six months down the line and still enjoy.



↑ You should see this girl's victory dance...



↑ Fireworks for the fully powered shots.



↑ A nifty way to get back your composure.

BONUS INFO

COMPOSURE
Caddy-beating and an overall sound performance on the course will improve your Composure Meter, which affects how well you play throughout the competitions.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Doesn't aim high, but looks surprisingly good for what it offers. Solid all-round.

STYLE

Humorous, cartoonish style throughout, but never detracting from the game at hand.

IMMERSION

Replete with little touches and animations in the background.

LIFESPAN

A decent number of unlockable features. This game has unlimited appeal, but can get repetitive.



GOOD POINTS

- ◆ SENSE OF HUMOUR
- ◆ LOADS OF MODES AND UNLOCKABLES



BAD POINTS

- ◆ IMPRECISE SWINGING CONTROLS
- ◆ SUPERTOUGH AI
- ◆ THE MUSIC IS EVER-SO-SLIGHTLY DODGY

SUMMARY

Not for hardcore golfers: this is a gamer's golf game. It's fun, simple, loaded with humour, and great to play with friends.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

7.6 / 10

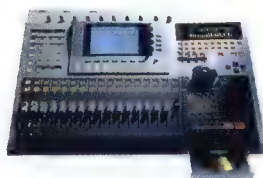
➤ **PREVIOUSLY:** This is the first time we've seen *Outlaw Golf*.
➤ **COMING SOON:** Hints & cheats

SUCH LANGUAGE: OUTLAW GOLF DOESN'T JUST FEATURE THE OPTION TO BEAT UP YOUR CADDY - THERE'S A BIT OF COARSE LANGUAGE IN THERE TOO!





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↑ Pierce Brosnan's visage lends some authenticity to the game. Too bad the voice is completely different.

The latest Bond mightfire, but misfires

007: NIGHTFIRE

WORDS: JAMES COTTEE

DEVELOPER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
PLAYERS: 1-4
WEBSITE: WWW.EA.COM/EAGAMES/
OFFICIAL/007_NIGHTFIRE/HOME.JPS

THE BRIEF
 STEER THE lecherous Bond through a variety of action set pieces.

THE WORLD'S IN danger, and as usual, only an aging British spy with exploding cufflinks can save us. The Americans have bolted a super-laser on to their space station, and left their new toy open to hackers like evil billionaire Raphael Drake.

So it's up to M16 to come to the rescue, in a game of global mayhem.

All of the requisite Bond action is here. Run and gun antics alternate with *Spyhunter* style vehicular silliness, with Bond back behind the wheel of a weaponised Aston Martin. In close quarters it's the familiar formula of ducking about with a Walther PPK and stealthily taking out guards. Astute players will note that the effete pistol doesn't come with a silencer in this game. That's quite okay, actually, because the guards can't hear you. They come from the Doctor Evil school of artificial intelligence, and are quite happy to let nearby colleagues cop a bullet between the eyes.

Bond's arsenal has been updated to keep pace with the times. The player gets the chance to play with an obvious swipe of one of the Pentagon's new toys, the OICW assault rifle. While it's possible to steal about dispatching guards one by one with a sniper rifle, this precaution all too often seems like a wasted effort. The elaborately scripted action sequences run on training wheels, feeling about as realistic as the psychedelic opening sequence.

The multiplayer mode is fairly comprehensive, but for all the power of the Xbox, it's still wanting compared to the venerable *GoldenEye*. The skin selection is just the same drab old lineup of terrorists and counter-terrorists. Plus the cardboard cut-out characters from the Story mode, of course. The maps are unimaginatively laid out, with puzzling corridors and the odd crate. Control is sluggish, further contributing to the dubious value of what should've been a standout feature.

With a dozen missions, this wouldn't be a long-term challenge, even if the game were particularly hard. Even on 007 difficulty, this is a walk in the park.

Nightfire is an immense disappointment for two related reasons. First, the enemy AI really is that stupid, which stands in contradiction to the immense hype behind the game, and how it challenges players with a flexible game world with multiple possibilities. Comparisons were even made to *Deus Ex*, funnily enough.

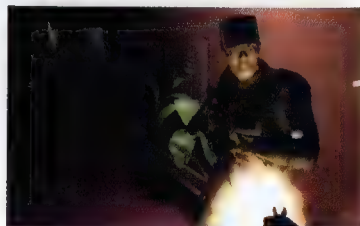
Second, expectation was high for this game, especially considering how decidedly average the previous Bond game, *Agent Under Fire*, was. *Nightfire* marks a great improvement in the visuals, but the gameplay remains insufferably flat-footed.



↑ What? No product to shamelessly plug?



↑ Sleeping on the job, as usual.



↑ "Oh, you finally noticed me?"



↑ Laser cutter: one of the cooler toys.

BONUS INFO

DO THE MOONWALK

On the final level, you get to mess about in orbit, just like Roger Moore did in *Moonraker*. No sign of Jaws, though.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Fair to average. Glossy, yet fairly unimaginative levels. Good draw distance, decent frame rate.

STYLE

Authentic James Bond dilettante savoir-fare. The babes in the game err towards skanky.

IMMERSION

Characters and situations consistent with the films, but gameplay is just a little too easy.

LIFESPAN

12 levels and fairly dull multiplayer don't speak well for *Nightfire*. Perhaps a rental.



GOOD POINTS

- GOOD VARIETY OF PLAY STYLES
- OFFICIALLY LICENSED BOND PRODUCT



BAD POINTS

- SUSPECT AI
- SIMPLISTIC, LINEAR
- IT'S NO GOLDENEYE

SUMMARY

Decent, playable, but not a real challenge. Sits somewhere between *Agent Under Fire* and *Tomorrow Never Dies*.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

6.6/10

PREVIOUSLY: *Nightfire* slipped in undetected
 COMING SOON: Hints & cheats

BLOCKHEADS: THE SILLY LOOKING BUILDING DEPICTED IN THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH REALLY IS M16 HEADQUARTERS. THE CONSPICUOUS TARGET FOR TERRORISTS HAS BEEN NICKNAMED "LEGOLAND" BY THE PEOPLE WHO WORK THERE. IT'S ALL PART OF THEIR NEW PUBLIC IMAGE, WHICH PRESUMABLY IS LULLING FOREIGN POWERS INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY.

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↑ In the second chapter, you have to stop this from happening to the bar by travelling back and finding the arsonist.

Remember the day you died? Your life depends on it

SHADOW OF MEMORIES

WORDS: STEVEN BAILEY

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: KONAMI
PUBLISHER: KONAMI
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
PLAYERS: 1
WEBSITE: WWW.KONAMI.COM

THE BRIEF

UNRAVEL THE mystery of your own murder by altering fate, solving puzzles and travelling through time.

TIME, PLEASE! We've spent the last months Sweeping it and Splitting it, and now we get the chance to meddle with it and control our destinies. In *Shadow of Memories*, you control Eike, a man stabbed in the back by an unknown assailant while leaving a café.

Eike enters a strange limbo where a camp, disembodied voice offers him the opportunity to go back in time and alter events in order to save his life. He agrees, and goes back to half an hour before the stabbing. If Eike succeeds, he must deal with the consequences of his new life.

If it sounds complicated, it isn't really. You're given a glimpse of the future and how you snuff it, then you're jetted back in time in order to prevent it from happening. In fact, everything about *Shadow of Memories* is a bit too simple,

from the primary school graphics to the suffocating linearity of the tasks you're asked to mill through. While the concept is fantastic, it's dull to play, thanks to the overlong cut-scenes and a plot with more holes than a tea bag.

Technically, it's quite shameful. The low-detail visuals shudder and creak around Eike, who clomps about the place in a pair of shoes that sound as if they have a megaphone stuck to them. This is a workmanlike conversion of a game that was workmanlike when it made its debut 18 months ago on the PlayStation 2.

Playing the game involves little more than completing a series of *Resident Evil*-style puzzles, but with none of that game's cool carnage inbetween. The puzzles are either too easy or so random that you're reduced to trial and error.

Silent Hill 2: Inner Fears outclasses this in terms of looks, atmosphere and overall quality, and is a better purchase than this messy gimmick of a title.



↑ What? Where? Who? How? Eh? Mummy?



↑ This is what time travel looks like.



↑ Awkward romantic scene ahoy!



↑ The 1500s are steeped in sepia.



↑ The city square is a hive of activity.

BONUS INFO

QUANTUM LEAP

You jump in and out of time with a digipad, a device that glows whenever something crucial happens in a different time period.

THE VERDICT

POWER

A first wave PS2 game. Your Xbox will get fat through lack of exercise if you play this too much.

STYLE

The continental town rendered in different time periods is quite neat, but overall everything is blocky.

IMMERSION

Most puzzles waver between obscure, vague and obvious; only very few will stoke your curiosity.

LIFESPAN

Later chapters require dedication to crack. But with a plot full of holes and oversights, you may not care.



GOOD POINTS

- ♦ A SOUND, ORIGINAL IDEA FOR A GAME.
- ♦ FAIRLY STYLISH AND INTERESTING SETTINGS.



BAD POINTS

- SCRUFFY VISUALS.
- PAINFULLY LINEAR.
- PUZZLES EITHER TOO RANDOM OR TOO EASY.

SUMMARY

In concept, it's an interesting bit of timeline management. In practice, though, it's drab, clumsy and low on enjoyment.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

4.0/10

» PREVIOUSLY: This is a first appearance in the mag for *Shadow...*

» COMING SOON: Tips - Issue 11



↑ And after all these years, we're still more than happy to accept a man who wears his undies on the outside.

Bright red underpants. It can only be...

SUPERMAN: THE MAN OF STEEL

WORDS: JAMES COTTEE

GAME INFORMATION

DEVELOPER: CIRCUS FREAK STUDIOS
PUBLISHER: INFOGRAMES
RELEASE DATE: NOVEMBER
PLAYERS: 1
WEBSITE: US.INFOGRAMES.COM/GAMES/SUPERMAN_THEMANOFSTEEL

THE BRIEF

SAVE THE world from Brainiac with your immense Kryptonian super powers!

SUPERMAN IS PERHAPS the most famous comic character the world has ever known, but this instantly recognisable demigod has a curse that surrounds any adaptation. We're not just counting the destitution of his creators, or the injury and madness that has plagued anyone who's ever played him on the silver screen. Nigh on every video game ever made about *Superman* has been a total disaster, succumbing to shoddy programming, glitchy graphics, awful voice acting, and more. But the single biggest problem with any *Superman* game is what it all boils down to - the matter of game design.

Games are defined by sets of rules, and success within these boundaries gives the player satisfaction. It's not rocket science. The thing is,

Superman can break just about any rule of the natural world. He can see through walls, fly faster than sound, resist any injury, blow icy gales from his lips, shoot lasers from his eyes, and he can even write decent newspaper copy. Levering near total omnipotence into a game that would simultaneously be difficult, and thus satisfying, has perplexed game designers since the days of the Atari 2600.

As boasted on the back of the box, one has full command of his powers. But how to make the game difficult? The comics and cartoons usually conjured up a plot by having enemies that were smarter than *Superman*. Game enemies are notoriously thick, so the designers had to take a few short cuts.

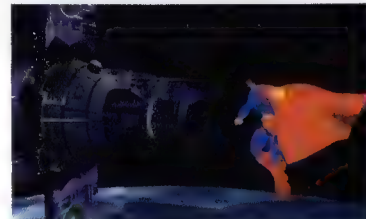
In the first skirmish of the game, *Superman* battles wave after wave of evil robots. Just to keep players on their toes, each kind of robot is only vulnerable to one of his attacks, be it fist, freeze breath, or heat vision. There is no way to finesse the attacks, it's just a question of stimulus and response. That's not exactly intelligent gaming there.

The game is linear, confining the player at any time to performing repetitive tasks, difficult tasks, or difficult repetitive tasks. The best parts of *The Man of Steel* roughly correspond to the worst parts of *Spider-Man*. That is, chasing villains around through the skyscrapers and trying to keep to tight deadlines. Time limits are a cheap way to distract the player from the pointlessness of a given task, and in this context it's like trying to squeeze blood from a stone.

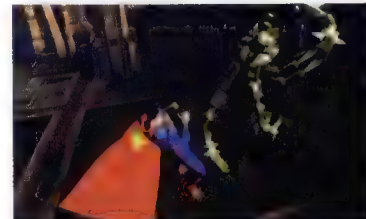
BONUS INFO

PHONE BOOTH

In the old Atari version of the game, you had to find an appropriate phone booth for Clark Kent to change in when things got hairy.



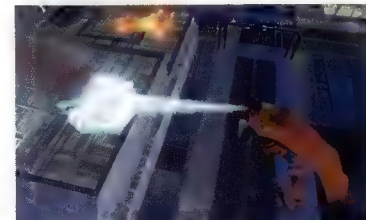
↑ Supes doesn't need to breathe in space!



↑ "Wait! I have to lock on to you first!"



↑ "Ha ha! Kneel before Kal-El!"



↑ Blast him with that Mentos freshness.

THE VERDICT

POWER

Some glossy surfaces and long draw distances, but the frame rate is a little choppy.

STYLE

Very much the comic book look and feel; garish colours, silly costumes, larger than life scale

IMMERSION

Little to none. Poor interface and preposterous tasks make getting in the "zone" near impossible

LIFESPAN

A handful of Easter Eggs lurk to reward those dedicated enough to brave this pointless game.

GOOD POINTS

- FAST, ENJOYABLE AND INTENSE MATCHES
- SUPERMAN GETS ALL OF HIS POWERS, FOR A CHANGE

BAD POINTS

- INANE GAME DESIGN
- SHONKY CAMERA
- POOR CONTROLS

SUMMARY

Sits squarely at the bottom of the pile for superhero adaptations, on Xbox or any other platform.

OFFICIAL AUSTRALIAN XBOX MAGAZINE SCORE

4.0/10

PREVIOUSLY: First look - Issue 03, page 032
COMING SOON: Hints & cheats

THERE'S A SUPERMAN VERSUS BATMAN MOVIE RUMOURED TO BE IN PRE-PRODUCTION. NICHOLAS CAGE WAS NAMED AS THE MAN OF STEEL AT ONE POINT, WHICH SHOULD GIVE YOU AN IDEA AS TO HOW BIG A DISASTER IT'LL BE IF IT EVER GETS OFF THE GROUND.

REVIEWS DIRECTORY

Lobbing the weeds over the fence into another mag's garden to leave prize-winning, mini-review blooms

THE XBOX GAMES

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP

ISSUE 03 Football
"A return to form for the franchise"
SCORE: 8.7

AGGRESSIVE INLINE

ISSUE 07 Rollerblading
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 09
"Entertaining extreme sports. Fresh ideas and a lasting challenge"
SCORE: 8.4

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2003

ISSUE 04 Baseball
"Fine sim of the hit-and-miss sport"
SCORE: 7.0

ANTZ EXTREME RACING

ISSUE 07 Racing
"Average, and too awkward for the kids"
SCORE: 5.0

ARCTIC THUNDER

ISSUE 03 Racing
"A disgraceful excuse for an Xbox game. It's just limp and lifeless to play"
SCORE: 2.4

AZURIK: RISE OF PERATHIA

ISSUE 03 Action/adventure
"A colourful but underwhelming fantasy"
SCORE: 3.6

BARBARIAN

ISSUE 07 Beat-'em-up
"A solid, playable arcade beat-'em-up with some nice ideas"
SCORE: 7.4

BATMAN: VENGEANCE

ISSUE 02 Action/adventure
"Bat-lore heavy, but too easy, too samey and nothing new"
SCORE: 6.8

BLADE II

ISSUE 08 Action
"Violent, repetitive and enjoyable in short bursts. Lots of vamps to kill"
SCORE: 5.2

BLOOD OMEN 2

ISSUE 02 Action/adventure
"Linear gameplay dampens the otherwise vamped-up action"
SCORE: 8.5

BLOOD WAKE

ISSUE 02 Racing/action
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 02
"Much of the time you're fighting the controls instead of the enemy"
SCORE: 7.4

BRUCE LEE:

QUEST OF THE DRAGON
ISSUE 08 Beat-'em-up
"Appallingly shoddy game that's an insult to the great man"
SCORE: 1.0

BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

ISSUE 04 Action/adventure
"Captures essence of the TV series; good enough to please non-fans"
SCORE: 8.9

BURNOUT

ISSUE 03 Racing
"Arcade racer delivering a massive dose of testosteronetainment"
SCORE: 8.5

CEL DAMAGE

Racing
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 03
"Dreamy looking, hectic and frustrating"
SCORE: 5.5

CHASE

ISSUE 08 Action
"Bare bones stunt action that makes you want to scream 'Cut!'"
SCORE: 5.1

CIRCUS MAXIMUS

ISSUE 05 Racing
PLAYABLE DEMO: Issue 06
"Gimmicky racer lacking in every way"
SCORE: 3.5

COMMANDOS 2: MEN OF COURAGE

ISSUE 05 Strategy
"Glitchy, extremely tough, but it has some control issues"
SCORE: 6.9

CONFLICT: DESERT STORM

ISSUE 07 Squad-based shooter
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 07
"A basic but entertaining tactical shooter with some quality war stories"
SCORE: 8.1

CRASH

ISSUE 03 Driving
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04, 09
"Instant, lo-fi, demolition derby fun for the few hours that it lasts"
SCORE: 6.6

CRASH BANDICOOT: THE WRATH OF CORTX

ISSUE 02 Platform
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 05
"One of the best cartoony worlds, but the old bandicoot has no new tricks"
SCORE: 7.1

CRAZY TAXI 3

ISSUE 06 Arcade driving
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 08
"Lots of mad fun with great mini-games but quite similar to previous versions"
SCORE: 7.5



DARK SUMMIT

ISSUE 02 Snowboarding
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 05
"Half-hearted gameplay fleshed out with a pointless storybook aspect"
SCORE: 3.5

DAVE MIRRA FREESTYLE BMX 2

ISSUE 02 BMX
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 02
"Pulling tricks is fun, but poor controls spoil the experience"
SCORE: 7.3

DAVID BECKHAM SOCCER

ISSUE 04 Football
"Outdated footy action that should be left alone, even by fans of Becks"
SCORE: 4.2

DEADLY SKIES

ISSUE 03 Flight sim
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04
"Not fast or exciting enough to fulfil that fighter pilot dream"
SCORE: 5.2

EGGO MANIA

ISSUE 08 Puzzle
"Decent two-player, brain-scratching fun"
SCORE: 6.5

THE ELDER SCROLLS III: MORROWIND

ISSUE 07 RPG
"By turns, wondrous, unconventional and huge. Unique, but slow paced."
SCORE: 9.1

ENCLAVE

ISSUE 06 Action/adventure
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 07
"Involving, but the catalogue of annoyances becomes annoying"
SCORE: 5.8

ESPN INTERNATIONAL WINTER SPORTS

ISSUE 04 Winter sports
"Pathetic sports anthology... a game stuck firmly in the Ice Age"
SCORE: 3.2

ESPN WINTER X GAMES SNOWBOARDING 2

ISSUE 05 Snowboarding
"A decent boarding game but a bit clumsy to play. Lots of features, though"
SCORE: 7.0

FI 2002

ISSUE 03 Racing
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04
"Solid, with everything a fan could want, but it's evolution, not revolution"
SCORE: 7.1

FILA WORLD TOUR TENNIS

ISSUE 09 Tennis
"A derivative tennis game with more faults than the San Geronio Pass"
SCORE: 2.6

FUZION FRENZY

ISSUE 01 Party
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 01
"More party popper than party popper. Far too simple and repetitive"
SCORE: 4.5

GAUNTLET DARK LEGACY

ISSUE 04 Adventure
"A fun-free game that's sluggish and frequently confusing to play"
SCORE: 3.8

GENMA ONIMUSHA

ISSUE 02 Action/adventure
"No-frills hack-'n'-slash that takes a while to crack. It's fun, but flawed"
SCORE: 7.0

GRAVITY GAMES: STREET.VERT.DIRT

ISSUE 09 BMX
"A horrible extreme sports game. Dire"
SCORE: 0.8

GUN METAL

ISSUE 04 Action
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 06
"Enjoyably intense robo-death combat - if you can stomach the tricky controls"
SCORE: 8.3

GUN VALKYRIE

ISSUE 02 Shoot-'em-up

PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 03

"Not for the faint-hearted, this has intense, skilful action all the way"
SCORE: 8.2

HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN

ISSUE 08 Action
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 09
"Great stealth game that rewards patience and planning"
SCORE: 8.3

HUNTER: THE RECKONING

ISSUE 05 Action/adventure
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 08
"A raucous, repetitive rumble. Good, unclear fun but multiplayer is messy"
SCORE: 8.3

ISS 2

ISSUE 03 Football
"Fans should treat this bitterly disappointing sequel with caution"
SCORE: 5.1

JAMES BOND 007 IN... AGENT UNDER FIRE

ISSUE 05 FPS
"Makes you feel like Bond, but the bad guys interaction is super-stupid"
SCORE: 6.3

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER

ISSUE 08 Surfing
"Cool ideas mixed with aquabatics and satisfying play. Original and fun."
SCORE: 8.6



KNOCKOUT KINGS 2002

ISSUE 03 Boxing
"An excellently presented but scrappy punch-'em-up"
SCORE: 6.3

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

ISSUE 05 Wrestling
"Nostalgic appeal for wrestling fans of old. Causes chuckles in multiplayer"
SCORE: 6.0

LOONS: THE FIGHT FOR FAME

ISSUE 06 Party/action
"Short-lived fun, but all done in real Looney Tunes style"
SCORE: 5.1

MAD DASH RACING

ISSUE 01 Racing
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 01
"Just enough Mad, too much Dash and not enough Racing"
SCORE: 6.5

MAT HOFMAN'S PRO BMX 2

ISSUE 08 BMX
"Average extreme sports game with dodgy controls and little imagination."
SCORE: 6.8

MAX PAYNE

ISSUE 02 Action
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 05
"Stylish, repetitive and worthy of your time... bullet time is brilliant gimmick, though, and it makes this game quite a fun little shooter."
SCORE: 8.5

MIKE TYSON HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

ISSUE 05 Boxing
"Plenty of depth and strategy but sketchy and lacking a killer punch"
SCORE: 6.7

MX2002 FEATURING RICKY CARMICHAEL

ISSUE 04 Motocross
"A limp yet slightly enjoyable dirt biker with some two-player mileage"
SCORE: 5.0

MYST III

ISSUE 08 Adventure
"Bonkers-but-beautiful series of increasingly difficult logic puzzles."
SCORE: 7.2

NBA INSIDE DRIVE 2002

ISSUE 03 Basketball
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 05
"A decent, playable basketball game, but not brilliant by any means"
SCORE: 7.2

NBA LIVE 2002

ISSUE 02 Basketball
"B-ball's end-to-end flow is somehow distilled into tedium"
SCORE: 7.4

NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2

ISSUE 09 Racing
"Good arcade racer that's a bit sluggish but offers solid driving fun."
SCORE: 7.2

NEW LEGENDS

ISSUE 04 Action/adventure
"A flawed game that quickly becomes repetitive and boring"
SCORE: 4.9

NHL 2002

ISSUE 02 Ice hockey
"Excellent multiplayer game with joyful passing and shooting"
SCORE: 8.2

NHL 2003

ISSUE 08 Ice hockey
"Fast and furious, entertaining and deep, this is the definitive ice hockey simulation experience"
SCORE: 8.2

NHL HITZ 20-02

ISSUE 02 Ice hockey
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 01
"Great-looking, polished and ultimately simple entertainment"
SCORE: 7.4

NHL HITZ 20-03

ISSUE 09 Ice Hockey
"Big laughs, high-adrenaline arcade ice hockey with depth and many features"
SCORE: 8.4

NIGHTCASTER

ISSUE 03 Adventure
"Idea is good, but the execution isn't. Wizard? Not by any stretch"
SCORE: 3.7

ODDWORLD: MUNCH'S ODDYSEE

ISSUE 01 Platform
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 03
"Fun to play and great to look at... it gets progressively more challenging as you go along, and it's absolutely brimming with character"
SCORE: 8.1



THE XBOX ELITE

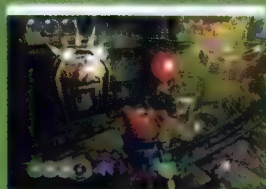
These are the best games for the console, scoring 8.5 or more. They must be played. You have our personal guarantee that each and every one of them is utterly fantastic, so go out and buy them right now!



AMPED: FREESTYLE SNOWBOARDING

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 02
TYPE: Snowboarding
"Addictive, impressive and deep. Makes a perfect landing"

SCORE: 8.7



BLINX: THE TIME SWEEPER

REVIEWED: Issue 08
TYPE: Platform
"Uses Xbox to take platform gaming into uncharted territory. Downright essential"

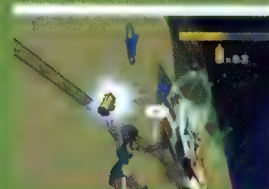
SCORE: 9.2



DEAD OR ALIVE 3

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 03
TYPE: Beat-'em-up
"Accessible, slick and as satisfying as any beat-'em-up. This is a visual benchmark"

SCORE: 8.5



JET SET RADIO FUTURE

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 05
TYPE: Platform/skating
"Supremely playable, and without doubt the most stylish game ever designed. Huge, intricate levels"

SCORE: 9.0



MOTO GP

REVIEWED: Issue 03
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04
TYPE: Racing
"Hotly contested bike racing combined with a perfect control method make this a real winner"

SCORE: 8.7



BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE

REVIEWED: Issue 08
GAME DISC: n/a
TYPE: Action RPG
"Absorbing RPG with healthy dose of frantic hack 'n' slashing"

SCORE: 8.5



DEATHROW

REVIEWED: Issue 06
GAME DISC: Game Disc Issue 10
TYPE: Futuristic Sports
"Punishing, loaded with detail (and verbal expletives), and totally frantic to play."

SCORE: 9.3



HALO

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04
TYPE: FPS
"Quite simply, a masterpiece and without question one of the best games ever made"

SCORE: 9.7



MADDEN NFL 2003

REVIEWED: Issue 08
GAME DISC: n/a
TYPE: US Sports
"So much to learn and master, so much multiplayer fun. Could, in theory, last forever"

SCORE: 9.2



PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 01
TYPE: Driving
"An epic racing game blending accuracy with entertainment"

SCORE: 8.9

PIRATES: THE LEGEND OF BLACK KAT

ISSUE 04 Action/adventure
"Everything in this ropey game feels lazy and uninspired"

SCORE: 7.1

PRISONER OF WAR

ISSUE 06 Puzzle/adventure
"Ambitious, intelligent strategy game marred by camera problems"

SCORE: 7.2

PRO TENNIS WTA TOUR

ISSUE 08 Tennis
"No excuse for this shocking game"

SCORE: 1.9



RALLISPORT CHALLENGE

REVIEWED: Issue 01
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 04
TYPE: Rallying
"Searingly fast rally game that never fails to get the adrenaline flowing. Handsome as hell, too"

SCORE: 8.5



ROCKY

REVIEWED: Issue 09
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 09
TYPE: Boxing
"Brilliantly evocative, this is dramatic multiplayer scrapping at its finest"

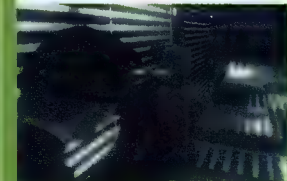
SCORE: 9.0



TIMESPLITTERS 2

REVIEWED: Issue 09
GAME MOVIE: n/a
TYPE: FPS
"The most complete FPS package on Xbox. Rife with features. Just buy it"

SCORE: 9.3



SPLINTER CELL

REVIEWED: Issue 08
GAME MOVIE: Game Disc 10
TYPE: Tactical Espionage
"The best game on Xbox since Halo. Stacked with an impossible level of detail."

SCORE: 9.7

QUANTUM REDSHIFT

ISSUE 09 Future racing
"Furiously fast, hardcore racing fans will love it. Steep difficulty curve, mind"

SCORE: 8.2



RED CARD

ISSUE 04 Football
"Innovative cartoon footy, but a there's lack of decent CPU opponents"

SCORE: 7.5

SEGA SOCCER SLAM

ISSUE 09 Arcade football
"Decent, frantic footy, best played with a friend. Ideal to rent"

SCORE: 6.8

SHREK

Platform
"A plain and unrewarding kids' game"

SCORE: 5.0

SILENT HILL 2: INNER FEARS

ISSUE 08 Survival horror

"Best survival horror on any console and the creepiest game ever made"

SCORE: 8.4

SIMPSON'S ROAD RAGE

Driving
"A scabby game made bearable by its funny voices and fun two-player mode"

SCORE: 3.9

SLAM TENNIS

ISSUE 06 Tennis
"Enjoyable and recommended, despite its few broken strings"

SCORE: 6.7

SPIDER-MAN: THE MOVIE

ISSUE 03 Platform
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 06
"Highly enjoyable use of a licence; crackles with superhero smarts"

SCORE: 8.8

SPLASHDOWN

ISSUE 06 Racing
"An truly entertaining jet ski racer with lots of great courses"

SCORE: 7.4

SPY HUNTER

ISSUE 04 Arcade driving
"Instantly enjoyable, completely superficial and often enjoyable"

SCORE: 7.5

SSX TRICKY

ISSUE 05 Snowboarding
"Fast and furious, but it needed soup up to become great on Xbox"

SCORE: 9.0

STAR WARS: JEDI STARFIGHTER

ISSUE 05 Arcade shooter
PLAYABLE DEMO: Issue 06
"A dose of enjoyable space combat needing more action to truly shine"

SCORE: 7.4

STAR WARS: OBI-WAN

ISSUE 03 Slice-'em-up
"A criminal waste of the licence"

SCORE: 3.3

STREET HOOPS

ISSUE 09 Basketball
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 07
"Unrewarding and uninviting urban sports fest with little substance"

SCORE: 7.3

TAZ: WANTED

ISSUE 07 Platform
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 08
"Swish cartoon graphics, but confusing and frustrating gameplay"

SCORE: 6.8

TD OVERDRIVE

ISSUE 04 Racing

"Bad handling makes this depressing"

SCORE: 6.8

TEST DRIVE OFF-ROAD: WIDE OPEN

Driving
"The lack of vehicle/ground interaction will soon have you sucking a tailpipe"

SCORE: 3.5

TETRIS WORLDS

ISSUE 09 Puzzle
"Merely dilutes the impact of the original. Okay, but there's nothing new"

SCORE: 6.0

THE THING

ISSUE 08 Survival horror
"Plenty of action and atmosphere but doesn't live up to its promise"

SCORE: 7.4

TRANSWORLD SURF

ISSUE 02 Surfing
"A lot to plough through, some great water effects but not varied enough"

SCORE: 7.1

TUROK EVOLUTION

ISSUE 08 Action/shooter
"A violent but ultimately disappointing sequel that feels older than the dinosaurs it features"

SCORE: 7.8

UFC: TAPOUT

ISSUE 02 Beat-'em-up
"A brutal two-player fighter but a bit one-dimensional if it's just you playing"

SCORE: 9.0

WRECKLESS

ISSUE 02 Driving
PLAYABLE DEMO: Game Disc 02
"Awesome demonstration of what Xbox can do, but not enough game in it"

SCORE: 8.0



WWE RAW

ISSUE 07 Wrestling
"Bland and quite outdated, but still, oddly enough, the best wrestler available on Xbox."

SCORE: 7.7

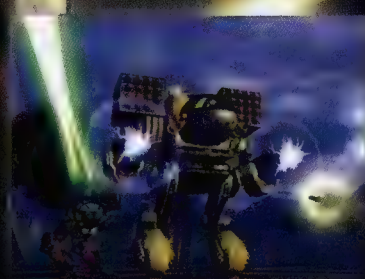
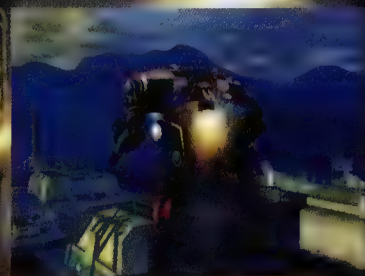
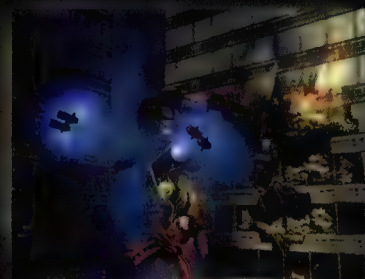
What are your favourite games? Come up with your own Top 5 and mail it to us at staff@oxm.com.au.

ENOUGH GAMES? CAN ANYONE BELIEVE THAT IN THE SPACE OF JUST 10 SHORT MONTHS, WE'RE STARTING TO RUN OUT OF SPACE IN THIS SPREAD TO FIT ALL THE GAMES THAT ARE AVAILABLE?

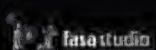


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MASTERCLASS

YOUNG FATHER TIME: **BEN TALBOT**

MONKEYS, ZOMBIES, Glamour Girls and Robots are just a few of the wacky characters duking it out in the multiplayer mode in *TimeSplitters 2*. Funnily enough, Ben and Steve seem to fit in perfectly with this group of misfits, and not just because they've been playing the game non-stop for weeks.

This month, the Welsh Wizards team up to present the ultimate guide to the multiplayer maps in *TimeSplitters 2*. They offer detailed analysis of the pros and cons of each map and take you through all of the weapons.

It's worth noting that all the maps have a recommended weapons and bots set. To get the most out of this guide, we suggest that you use the recommended weapons too.

Some of the maps have to be unlocked by completing the Arcade Matches. But because we like to do these things right, we've indicated which matches you need to beat. Take heed of Ben and Steve's instructions and you'll be a deathmatch master in no time.

Lock and load, Marines!



TIMESPLITTERS 2

ULTIMATE MULTIPLAYER GUIDE!



MEXICAN MISSION

CONSISTS OF A main building networked with labyrinthine corridors and a rooftop area overlooking a huge courtyard. It's easy to become disoriented inside the main building, so stick to the outdoor areas when possible.



↑ Arribba! We're in Me-hi-co.

WAY OF THE GUN

Your standard six-shooters are great for hitting players hard and fast from distance. If you want to get up-close and personal, grab a Plasma Auto-rifle and charge the enemy while firing it. Just make sure there's no one behind you when trying this. The Homing Rocket Launcher is excellent for fighting in the main courtyard but less useful indoors.

BEN SAYS: As soon as you spawn, make your way to the upper level of the Mission, to the balcony overlooking the courtyard. Pick up the two shields and the invisibility power-up. Height offers a natural advantage for shooting your opponents so stay on the balcony and pick 'em off with your six-shooters.

STEVE SAYS: At the front of the courtyard go down the left-hand stairwell into the basement to find body armour. The Homing Rocket Launcher is at the far right-hand side of the square basement room. Try to shoot the explosive clay pots when your opponent is nearby for an easy kill.



ICE STATION

THREE MILITARY outposts in the middle of a huge, snowy plain. The main, central outpost has two fixed gun positions on the middle level, equipped with heavy machine guns and rockets. A large tunnel runs underground.



↑ Something to break the ice.

WAY OF THE GUN

The Tactical 12 Gauge Shotgun is not too effective unless you can sneak up on an unsuspecting foe. The SBP90 Machine gun is extremely effective with the scope turned on. Obviously, you'll want to grab a Homing Rocket Launcher whenever you can.

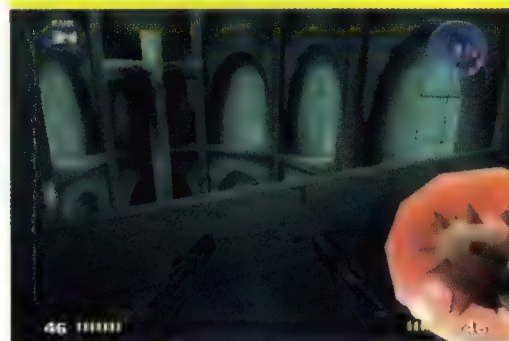
BEN SAYS: Chances are, everyone will be fighting over the Homing Rocket Launcher at the top level of the central building. You'll also have an excellent vantage point from here over most of the icy plain. Another Homing Rocket Launcher can be found in the centre of the green underground tunnel.

STEVE SAYS: Whether you want to use the Sniper Rifle, found in both of the smaller outposts, will depend on your enemies' tactics. If they're dashing around with Homing Rockets and you've got a shaky hand, it probably isn't a good idea. Sniping is a great way to get people out of the gun turrets.



HOSPITAL

A VICTORIAN-STYLE hospital on two floors. Most rooms on the lower floor have at least two doorways, making it almost impossible to keep your back covered. Stay alert and keep one eye on the radar at all times.



↑ Jack the Ripper lurks here.

WAY OF THE GUN

Lock and load with a pair of Tommy Guns or grab the Grenade Launcher from the alcove behind the balcony overlooking the large crucifix on the second floor.

BEN SAYS: Pick up the Double Tommy Guns from the left-hand toilet cubicle behind the shower room on the ground floor. You'll have a huge advantage over the other players if you can grab these babies. If you're confident enough to get on the balcony above the operating theatre, there's another pair of Tommy Guns up there.

STEVE SAYS: Has someone turned you into a blazing fireball? If so, run to the shower on the ground floor and put yourself out. Use the secondary fire mode of the Grenade Launcher to leave fireballs on the ground. If you put them on and near corners, your opponents are likely to career into them.



TRAINING GROUND



↑ Control the Remote Miniguns.

WAY OF THE GUN

Pick up a Minigun and keep the barrel spinning right from the word go. Don't be too concerned about conserving ammo; it's fairly easy to come by. Ignore close range weapons like the Shotgun and the Flamethrower unless you're extremely confident.

BEN SAYS: You might want to access the Remote Miniguns via the green control panels in the main bunker. This is much more effective with a large number of players in the level. If you don't intend using the remote guns, neutralise them by shooting them so that no-one else can turn them against you.

STEVE SAYS: Don't stand anywhere near the explosive barrels in the outdoor area. If anyone shoots them, you'll be set ablaze. If you start in the outdoor area, go for the body armour on the rocky outcrop. There's another one on the ramp below the assault-cannon bunker and a third behind the black derelict building.

TWO CONCRETE BUNKERS, two derelict buildings and a large underground control centre provide a hectic battleground. Given that the weapons are extremely powerful in this stage, it isn't a great idea to hide. Get into the thick of the battle with Minigun blazing.



AZTEC



↑ Set the arrows on fire.

WAY OF THE GUN

Though equipped with a handy sniper scope, the Crossbow isn't effective enough to make it worthwhile. Fortunately, single Tommy Guns can be found all over the level. To give yourself the upper hand, grab a Grenade Launcher, just be careful not to hit yourself with it in the narrow corridors.

BEN SAYS: Pick up the Grenade Launcher from a log to the left of the spiked bamboo gate. I also like to grab the shrink power-up from the dense jungle area. You'll become a much smaller target with this useful item. To reach it, go through the dark tunnel in the courtyard with the Tommy Gun.

STEVE SAYS: There's an excellent sniper spot in the cave at the end of the rope bridge, where you'll also find body armour. Unfortunately, there might not be much 'traffic' in this area for you to shoot at. Be patient and steady, though, and you will reap the rewards.

THIS BEAUTIFUL outdoor level bears a few similarities to the Aztec level in *GoldenEye*. Narrow corridors connect a series of three courtyards. At one end of the level, a huge rope bridge contains the carnage via a bottleneck.



SCRAPYARD



↑ The real junkyard wars.

WAY OF THE GUN

The Electrotool fires a straight and constant stream of plasma. Although its range is good, it doesn't do a lot of damage. You're probably safer using the Lasergun (they are commonplace in the scrapyard). Once again, the most powerful weapon is the mighty Homing Rocket Launcher.

BEN SAYS: Rather than running around and getting mashed in the outdoor area, I prefer to go inside the building. Run through the corridor and go up to the second floor for two excellent sniper positions. If you've got the Lasergun, switch on the shield and you'll be really difficult to kill from the floors below.

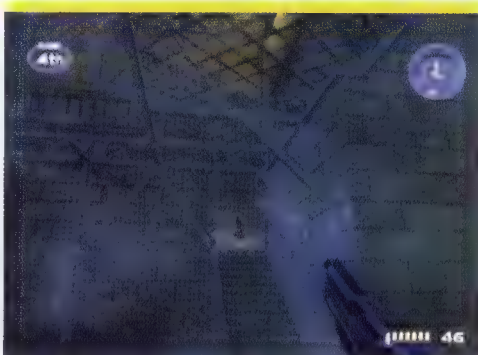
STEVE SAYS: Make yourself king of the Scrapyard by grabbing the Homing Rocket Launcher from the circular platform in the centre of the level. The invisibility power-up can be found on the right-hand wall of the outdoor area. Invisible and Launcher-ed up, you will be a mighty multiplayer.

UNLOCKED with a bronze trophy, or better, from the Scrap Metal arcade match.

WHAT BETTER PLACE for a good scrap than the Scrapyard? It's a huge outdoor area with a single corridor at the rear. The corridor leads up to a sniper position overlooking the main area.



NIGHTCLUB



↑ It's raining, it's pouring.

WAY OF THE GUN

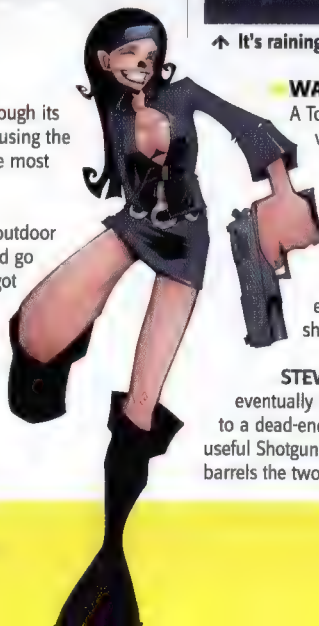
A Tommy Gun can be found in the well-lit alcove in the outdoor area. This is very effective in the indoor corridors. When using the TNT, try to stick it to a wall where your enemies are fighting one another. Make sure they don't spot you deploying this weapon or they'll probably run away.

BEN SAYS: There are more routes to the outdoor area than you might expect. Shoot through the windows and you'll have immediate access to the fire escape, overlooking the rainy streets below. The metal fire escape has a quad damage power-up on the third level, but people can shoot you through its grated floor.

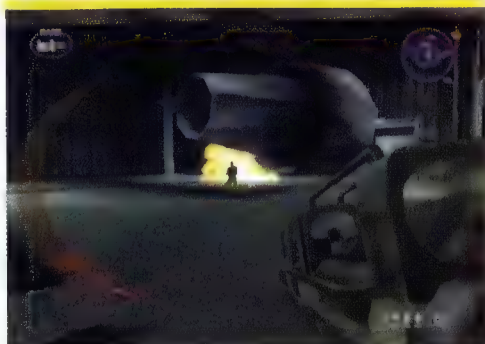
STEVE SAYS: Head to the ground floor of the indoor area and you'll eventually come to an area with lots of glass windows. Follow the corridor along to a dead-end and you'll be rewarded for this slight detour with a pair of extremely useful Shotguns. If you're a good shot, you'll be able to clean up quickly with the four barrels the two weapons provide.

UNLOCKED with a bronze trophy, or better, from the Burns Dept arcade match.

DECEPTIVELY LARGE, the Nightclub has both an indoor and outdoor area. A heavy rain storm outside means that visibility is poor.



HANGAR



↑ Hit those henchmen hard.

WAY OF THE GUN

Despite looking weak, the S47 Soviet really packs a punch and has a great zoom function to boot. The real daddy of this stage is the Lasergun, a weapon that charges up when you hold the Right Trigger. Holding the left trigger activates a superb shield, although it won't protect you from Rockets.

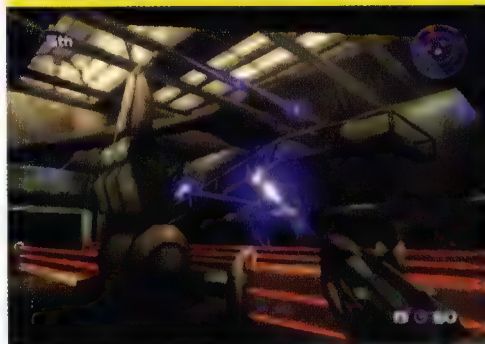
BEN SAYS: Your first course of action should be to pick up the mighty Lasergun from behind the metal crate to the left of the baggage loading area. You'll also be able to pick up a body armour next to the wall in front of this crate. An additional body armour lies between the wheels of the jumbo jet in the main hangar.

STEVE SAYS: It can be quite a trek to collect the speed boost power-up from the rear of the main hangar, although it's definitely worth it. Go up to the second floor of the loading area and collect the devastating Rocket Launcher, the only one in the level.

Unlocked with a bronze trophy, or better, from the Top Shot arcade match.

CONSISTS OF A baggage loading bay, a cargo storage area and obviously, an aircraft hangar. Don't hang around underneath the massive jumbo jet - grab a powerful weapon and make the cargo area your hunting ground.

ROBOT FACTORY



↑ A factory in which robots are fabricated.

WAY OF THE GUN

Using the SciFi Handgun is an exciting experience as the shots rebound from wall to wall until they hit something. You're quite likely to accidentally zap yourself though. Go for the Homing Rocket Launcher and the Lasergun if you really want to rule.

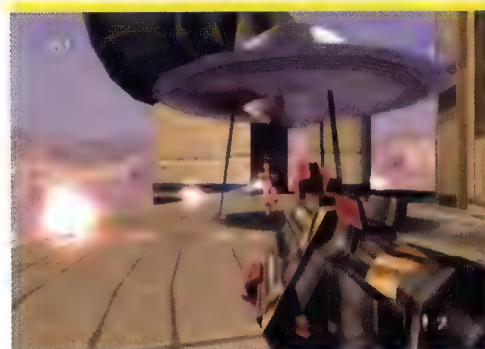
BEN SAYS: The key to success in this level is waiting for the quad damage power-up on the ground on the right hand side of the railway track. Once powered-up, collect a Lasergun and charge it up before each shot. This way, you'll kill each of your opponents in a single hit.

STEVE SAYS: Head to the first-level balcony on the left-hand side of the railway track for a trusty Homing Rocket Launcher. If someone's already taken that one, head over the bridge and you'll come to a dead end, where you'll find another. One of these is key to success here.

Unlocked with a bronze trophy, or better, from the Demolition Derby arcade match.

DEFINITELY ONE of the most fun and frantic levels in the game is constructed from two large bridges spanning a railway track. You can't cross the railway track on foot, so learning where the bridges begin and end is essential.

UFOPIA



↑ Just like Mars Attacks.

WAY OF THE GUN

Proximity mines are ideally used setting traps for the opposition. They're difficult to spot in the dark grey corridors of Ufopia. They do, however, make a distinctive noise and pop up into the air giving you seconds to scarp before you're blown to oblivion.

BEN SAYS: Ufopia has some great sniping positions because most of the upper floors provide windows to the floors below. I like to grab the Proximity mine Launcher from the small UFO on the ground floor. Try planting them in narrow corridors; just remember where you dropped them so you don't get caught in your own trap.

STEVE SAYS: From the ground floor, head up the corridor on the far left-hand side. You should see groups of purple windows on the way to a dead end. You'll find a brilliant sniper position and Homing Rockets. If you want to get powered up, you'll find a shrink power-up and body armour on the small rooftop section.

Unlocked with a bronze trophy, or better, from the R109 Beta arcade match.

THIS LEVEL never ceases to amaze us with its clever design. Ufopia is a large cylindrical arena with an outdoor rooftop area and a UFO factory on the two lower floors. The UFOs provide excellent cover during tense firefights.

CHINESE



↑ Mmm...special fried bad guy.

WAY OF THE GUN

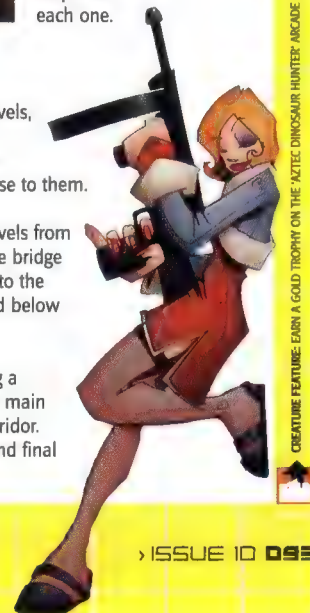
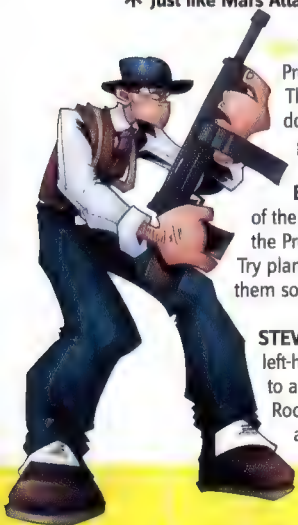
Because this level is much more 'boxy' than most of the levels, the task of hitting people with the Grenade Launcher (especially the secondary fire mode) is much simpler. Take pleasure in setting your foes alight, just try not to get too close to them.

BEN SAYS: This was always one of the best deathmatch levels from the first *TimeSplitters*. There's a pair of Tommy Guns on the bridge in the garden and a quad damage power-up in the alcove to the right of the bridge. If you get set on fire, jump into the pond below the bridge to douse the flames.

STEVE SAYS: Apologies for repetition, but it's worth getting a Grenade Launcher on this stage. There's one in front of the main entrance and another at the dead end of the basement corridor. Go down the stairs into the seating area to find the third and final Grenade Launcher behind a glass wall.

Unlocked with a bronze trophy, or better, from the Starship Whoopers arcade match.

ONE OF THE classic levels from the original *TimeSplitters* becomes one of the largest stages in the sequel. Chinese is almost entirely square. Within that there are plenty of corners with surprises around each one.





CHASM



Unlocked with a bronze trophy, or better, from the Can't Handle This arcade match.

A LEVEL FOR fans of *Halo*'s 'Boarding Action', Chasm consists of two opposite buildings each with three floors. There's virtually no cover to be had because both buildings are open-faced and connected by a bridge on each floor.

↑ Don't stand on the bridge too long.

WAY OF THE GUN

Just like those in *GoldenEye*, the remote mines can be stuck to anything in the level and will detonate when they sense movement. Unfortunately, their bright-green colour will often alert enemies to their presence.

BEN SAYS: Don't take the risk of dashing across the bridges. If you really have to, use the uppermost bridge for safety. Grab one of the level's numerous Rocket Launchers and camp on the top level of either building. You'll be able to swat people off the bridges.

STEVE SAYS: Remote Mines are a work of genius! Try sticking them to ceilings and on upper walls to make them more difficult to spot. Laying mines on the bridges is a great way of restricting your enemies' movement, but if you try this tactic, make sure you keep away from the blasts...



CIRCUS



Unlocked with a gold trophy from each of the Challenges.

ONE OF THE largest maps in *TimeSplitters 2* and definitely one of the best looking. The Circus map has a large outdoor area, connected to a tent with a merry-go-round, a big top, and a stable.

↑ There's no clowning around.

WAY OF THE GUN

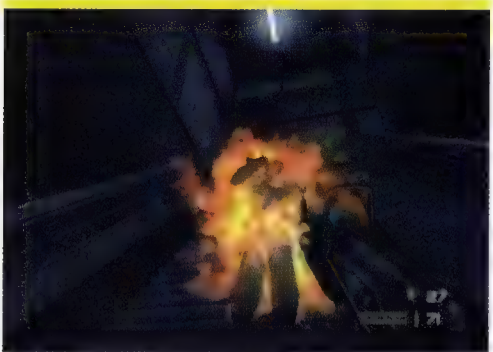
There is a huge arsenal of weapons to choose from in the Circus. If you miss out on a Homing Rocket, go for the S47 Soviets near the fence in the outdoor area.

BEN SAYS: Slap bang in the middle of the big top is a Homing Rocket Launcher. However, it's a large open space that will leave you vulnerable as you dash across it. I'd suggest grabbing the shrink power-up from the stalls first. There's also body armour lying in the corridor connecting the big top to the outdoor area.

STEVE SAYS: Hiding behind the spinning horses in the merry-go-round with the Homing Rockets is a tactic that's likely to infuriate the opposition. Just be careful that a horse doesn't spin in front of you when you're about to shoot. Other than that, stay on the move to stay alive.



STREETS



Unlocked with gold trophies from all of the Honorary league arcade matches.

ANOTHER 'FRIEND' from *TimeSplitters*. One long street with four, right-angled turns make up this simple map. There are derelict buildings at either end of the street which allow access to an upper balcony.

↑ Streets - Original Violent Material.

WAY OF THE GUN

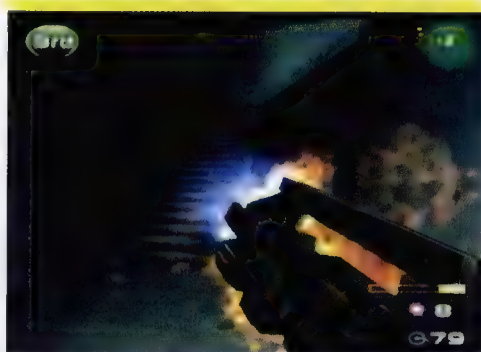
Conquering the mean Streets will require some heavy weaponry. Rocket launchers are in the derelict buildings at the street ends and along the balconies. Tactical Combat Shotguns can be picked up from ground level at several points along the street.

BEN SAYS: Streets is unchanged from the original *TimeSplitters*. Lurking on the balconies isn't a good idea; even if your enemies miss you with the rocket launcher, you'll probably still take splash damage off the wall behind. Get the invisibility power-up from the alcove in the middle section of the street.

STEVE SAYS: With all that firepower around, chances are you won't live long. Raise your life expectancy by picking up the body armour from the small alcoves at ground level, near both ends of the street.



SITE



Unlocked with gold trophies from all of the Elite league arcade matches. It's hard...

A CONSTRUCTION site with multiple platforms above ground. This map also features an underground sewer pipe system. You may already be familiar with this entertaining map if you've played the original *TimeSplitters*.

↑ Unlock this and you've done exceptionally well.

WAY OF THE GUN

You'll find a full complement of modern-day weapons in the Site - S47 Soviets, Grenade Launcher, Shotgun and Homing Rocket Launcher. The Homing Rocket Launcher is the trickiest weapon to get, sitting on a metal girder behind the trailer. Climb up to the second floor of the partially constructed building and drop down for it.

BEN SAYS: The trailer in the middle of the yard is a good place to head to if you need a Grenade Launcher and health. Look for body armour between three pallets of bricks, next to the trailer. If you can stay sharp on the above ground platforms, you have an excellent chance of victory.

STEVE SAYS: Use the sewer pipe system to run away and hide if your opponent is seriously tooled up. It actually has inlets and outlets all over the map, making it ideal for hit and run battles. Try luring the enemy into the tunnels when you're armed with Homing Rockets; you can be assured that they won't know what hit them.



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BO' SELECTA YOUR TOP SOUNDTRACKS



GETTING TO THE office in the morning has become something of a music hazard this month. Owen

has taken to starting work early so he can listen to elevator music at top volume. Help him see the error of his ways, please, by sending in your Top Five Tracks for your Xbox games.

AMPED

Denise Davies knows how to rock hard, play harder and flip around aggressively in a game of *Amped*.

POD (ALIVE)

ROLLIN' (LIMP BIZKIT)
BLOW MY BUZZ (D12)
FAT LIP (SUM 41)
GRAVEL PIT (WU TANG CLAN)

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING

Can you spot the game reference in the Top Five from Wayne Bond?

GIMME THAT NUT (EASY E)
PUSHING ME AWAY (LINKIN PARK)
SHINOBI VS. DRAGON NINJA (LOST PROPHETS)
BUILD ME UP BUTTERCUP (FOUNDATIONS)
MAKES NO DIFFERENCE (SUM 41)

F1 2002

John Patterson has also sent us some vintage rock and metal tracks. Ben's gonna' have these tracks blasting on his Xbox soon.

PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (IRON MAIDEN)
WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE (GUNS N' ROSES)
MONKEYWRENCH (FOO FIGHTERS)
DEAD CELL (PAPA ROACH)
SPYBREAK (PROPELLERHEADS)

HINTS & CHEATS

THE THING

ISSUE 08, 7.4

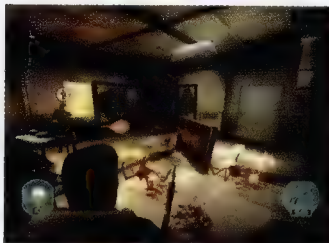
GAME DISC 09, GAME MOVIE

PERSUASION

If one of your team members no longer trusts you, his display icon will turn orange and he will then refuse to follow orders. Point your gun's crosshair over his face for three seconds or longer and he will be 'persuaded' to follow your every command.

GET HELP KILLING THING

Just before the second boss battle, walk up to the garage door and get the doctor close by your side. Command him not to follow you and nudge him as close to



↑ There's Things we need to discuss.

the door as possible by walking directly into him. Tell him to follow you again and immediately flip the door switch. The doctor will now appear in the room with the second boss and will heal you when necessary.

SKIP FIRST BOSS BATTLE

When you encounter the first boss battle, hold diagonal up/left (northwest on the compass) on the Right thumbstick and you'll run right past the Thing without it hitting you. You'll also find yourself next to the junction box, which you should fix immediately. Once that's done, make your escape through the door on the right-hand side.

SHUT THAT DOOR

Always close the doors behind you as you move into new areas. This will prevent the walker Things from sneaking up behind you as they don't have the ability to open doors.

SAVE YOUR TEAM

If you see that one of your team members is about to go crazy, (indicated in red on his display) shock him with the Tazer and remove his weapon. Wait until his display has returned to normal and

return his gun to regain trust.

REGAIN TRUST

Another way to regain trust is to keep a good supply of blood test kits. Using one on yourself will instantly restore the trust of your entire team. Don't use them on your team members because that won't indicate if they've been infected.

GRAVITY GAMES BIKE STREET. VERT. DIRT

ISSUE 09, 0.8

Note: Enter each of the following cheats at the cheats menu

MASTER CODE

Enter the code LOTACRAP to unlock all the characters, bikes and stages in the game. What a very apt cheat code...

MAX STATS

Enter the code MAXSTATS to boost all your character's abilities.

ELLISON MOVIE

Enter the code ANDFMV to unlock the Andre Ellison video in the movies section. It's a good 'un.

McCOY MOVIE

Enter the code DMCFMV to unlock the Dennis McCoy video in the movies section. It's the Real McCoy...

BESTWICK MOVIE

Enter the code JAMFMV to unlock the delightful Jamie Bestwick video in the movies section.

RAMSDALL MOVIE

Enter the code LEIFMV to unlock Leigh

Ramsdell's very entertaining video in the movies section.

HALL MOVIE

Enter the code FUZFMV to unlock the Fuzzy Hall video in the movies section.

THE ELDER SCROLLS 3: MORROWIND

ISSUE 07, 9.1

GAME DISC 09, GAME MOVIE



↑ Doesn't look too Elder to us...

RESTORE FATIGUE

While playing the game, press B to bring up the menus. Hit the Left trigger to switch to the Stats menu and select 'Fatigue'. Press Black twice, White twice, Black one more time and then hold A until your fatigue is restored.

RESTORE HEALTH

While playing the game, press B to bring up the menus. Hit the Left trigger to switch to the Stats menu and select 'Health'. Press Black, White, Black three times and then hold A until your health is restored.

RESTORE MAGICKA

During the game, press B to bring up the menus. Hit the Left trigger to switch to the Stats menu and select 'Magicka'. Press Black, White twice, Black, White and then hold A until your Magicka is restored.

MOVE WHILE OVER-ENCUMBERED

To move while you're laden with too much stuff, simply hold up on the d-pad while repeatedly taking out your weapon and putting it away. You will move forward a little bit each time.



↑ Street.Vert. Awfulgame whyouplayit?





↑ The mighty Daywalker.

BLADE II

ISSUE 08, 5.2

Note: All the directions in the following cheats must be entered using the d-pad.

UNLOCK ALL LEVELS

Pause the game and hold down the Left trigger. Then press Down, Up, Left, Left, B, Right, Down, X.

INFINITE AMMO

Pause the game and hold down the Left trigger. Then press Left, B, Right, X, Up, Y, Down, A.

INFINITE HEALTH

Pause the game and hold down the Left trigger. Then press Y, X, Y, X, Y, B, Y, B.

INFINITE RAGE

Pause the game and hold down the Left trigger. Then press Left, Down, Left, Down, Right, Up, Right and Up.

UNLOCK ALL WEAPONS

Pause the game and hold down the Left trigger. Then press X, B, Down, Left, B, B and Y.

UNLOCK 'DAYWALKER' DIFFICULTY

Pause the game and hold down the Left trigger. Then press Left, B, Up, Down, X, B and A.

STREET HOOPS

ISSUE 09, 7.3

GAME DISC 07, PLAYABLE DEMO

Note: Enter the following cheats at the cheats menu.

UNLOCK BRICK CITY OUTFITS

Press Right trigger, Black, Right trigger, Left trigger, Y, X, Right trigger and then the Left trigger.

UNLOCK CLOWN OUTFITS

There's lots of clowning around with this cheat. Press X, Left trigger, X and Y.

UNLOCK COWBOY OUTFITS

Press Y, White twice and Right trigger.

UNLOCK ELVIS OUTFITS

Dress your players like the King by pressing Y, Black, White, Black twice, the Left trigger and Black.

UNLOCK KUNG FU OUTFITS

Press Y twice, X and Left trigger.

UNLOCK PIMP OUTFITS

To kit out your men in the Mack Daddy style, press Right trigger, X, Y, Black, and A.

SECRET CHARACTERS

To unlock DJ Mugz, Cypress Hill and Bobo as playable characters, beat tournament mode on 'Greatest of All Time' difficulty.

MORE SECRET CHARACTERS

Go to the clothing store and keep purchasing P.Miller clothing until you have spent \$2,000. As you leave the store, you will be notified that you have unlocked rapper Master P and his son Lil' Romeo.

UNLOCK HALF MAN-HALF AMAZING

To Unlock Half Man-Half Amazing as a playable character, you have to beat the Urban Hitmen team in World Tournament mode.



↑ Let's play ball - in new gear.

MAT HOFFMAN'S PRO BMX 2

Issue 08, 6.8

Note: All directions in the following Matt Hoffman's Pro BMX 2 cheats must be entered using the d-pad. Codes have to be entered at the 'Press Start' screen.



↑ Poor old Mat Hoffman.

UNLOCK BIG FOOT

Press B, Up, Right, Up and Y.

UNLOCK DAY SMITH

Press B, Up, Down, Up, Down and Y.

UNLOCK THE MIME

Press B, Left, Right, Left, Right and Left.

UNLOCK VANESSA

For this lovely lady, just press B, Down, Left, Left, Down and Y.

UNLOCK VOLCANO

Press B, Up, Up, A, Up, Up and A.

BARBARIAN

ISSUE 07, 7.4



↑ The human snowglobe.

ALTERNATE COSTUMES

Highlight your chosen character, then press the Right trigger at the character selection screen.

MOVE THE LOADING SCREEN ICONS

When the loading screen with the skull appears, use the Left Thumbstick to move the skull around, and the Right thumbstick to move the word 'Loading'. Hours of fun there...

YOUR OPINION

IN THE WAKE of all the overseas hype and everything else to do with Xbox Live, we asked: What game would you like to play on Xbox Live?

Midtown Madness 3. I really loved the first two games on PC.

Craggle

Pro Evolution Soccer, because it's the only way that Australia can win the World Cup.

Top Muppet

Unreal Championship. It's being highly underestimated. If it matches the awesome playability of Unreal Tournament, then everyone is in for a treat.

Opus

Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon looks awesome. From the footage I have seen it's gonna' rule!

Number 117 - John

I'm looking forward to NFL2K3. It's the sports title I'm most excited about.

Big Gus

Unreal Championship, and then next year, Halo 2. Obviously, the Xbox communicator opens up endless possibilities. I look forward to hooking up a four-man team with us all located in different parts of the country.

Top RVDJan4life

Any real time strategy. Any news on WarCraft or Command and Conquer yet?

Samboundy

I'd love to play Black & White. The thought of gods sending their pets into battle in a huge online arena is mouth watering!

The enoeffect

I would like to play any game that has a massive interactive online world. A kind of Command and Conquer game, but in first or third-person perspective. If this has not already been thought of, then let's get it on.

Ageing Gamer

NEXT MONTHS TOPIC

We want to know: Just how did you spend your Xbox Xmas?

Send your seasonal suggestions via email to staff@oxm.com.au with 'Your Opinion' as the subject line. Or alternatively, send it via snail mail to Your Opinion, Official Australian Xbox Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355.



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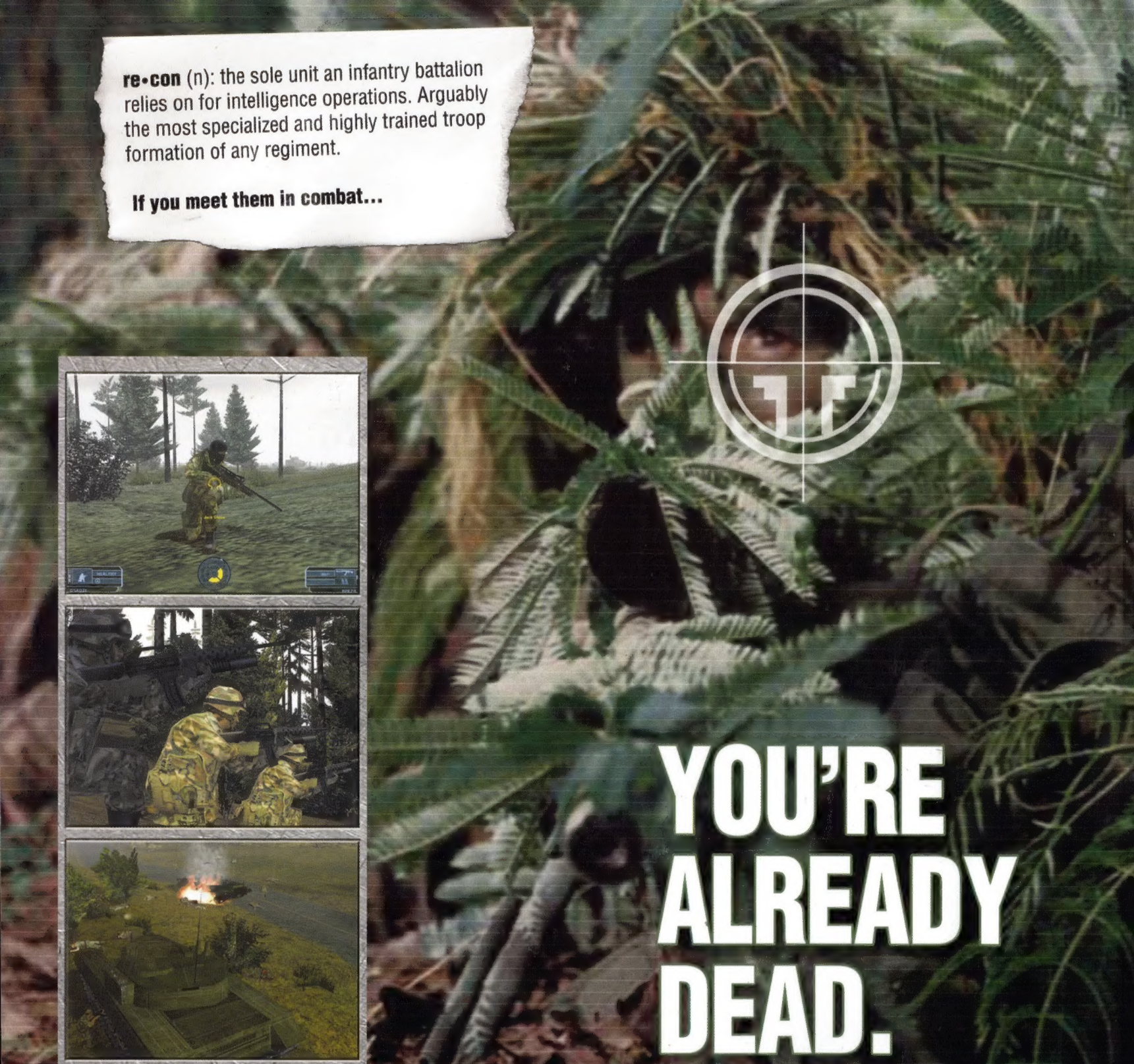
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re•con (n): the sole unit an infantry battalion relies on for intelligence operations. Arguably the most specialized and highly trained troop formation of any regiment.

If you meet them in combat...



YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD.

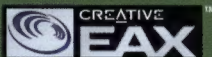


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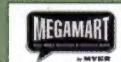
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